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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 2 April 2012**

**Lundi 2 avril 2012**



**Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac**

**Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac**

**Clerk  
Deborah Deller**

**Greffière  
Deborah Deller**



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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 April 2012

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 avril 2012

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Could we observe a moment of silence, please?

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to welcome, on behalf of all members, the students who are here for the eighth annual Ontario Medical Association day. They're sitting above us here. They're with us for the day, and I hope you'll join them for lunch.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I would also like to greet the Ontario Medical Students Association, in particular the co-chairs, Stephanie Kenny and Margaret Olszewski.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I'd like to recognize three friends in the gallery. I have Randy Aulbrook from New Liskeard and his wife, Carole, and our friend Darryl Wolk.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Mississauga-Rouge River.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I would like to introduce two residents of Scarborough-Rouge River: Sandra and Joseph Jagmohan, the parents of page Victoria. They're here visiting the Legislature today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Forgive me. To correct the record, it is not Mississauga; it's Scarborough-Rouge River. I apologize.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to introduce the two MPPs for a day from the riding of Kitchener-Conestoga: McKenna Seebach from New Hamburg, who attends Forest Glen Public School and is in grade 6, and Hendrik Rollemann, also from New Hamburg, who attends Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School in grade 9. Welcome.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I would like to welcome to Queen's Park today the honorary consul of the Republic of Burundi, Mr. Howard Crosner. With him is his son, Daniel, who is in grade 5 at Royal St. George's College. I'd like to welcome him. He's aspiring to be a politician later on.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'd like to introduce Olga and Mauro Manfredi, who are the parents of my L.A., Luca. They're in the west gallery. Welcome to the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions?

### MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** To keep things somewhat light, the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell is celebrating a birthday today, so we wish him a happy birthday.

*Applause.*

### WEARING OF PINS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Hamilton Mountain.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that all members are to be permitted to wear pins in recognition of World Autism Awareness Day today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton Mountain has requested unanimous consent to wear the pins for recognition of autism day. Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The question is to the Premier. For some time, the Ontario PCs have been calling for a mandatory and legislated wage freeze for all public servants in the province of Ontario. You indicate that maybe we budgeted you.

Could you please tell me, in Bill 55, your budget bill, exactly what page your wage freeze is on?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm delighted to receive the question and delighted to learn that my honourable colleague is, in fact, now taking a look at our budget. I think that's good news for his party and for Ontarians. I would remind my honourable colleague that for some time—his advice to us is that we need to address compensation issues, and we agree. In fact, more than half of the money that we spend in government is devoted to paying our public sector partners. So our commitment to Ontarians is that we will enter into collective bargaining with our public sector partners.

We've also made it clear that, should we not achieve the result that we need to achieve in order to abide by our fiscal plan, we'll then consider any and all measures necessary to ensure that that happens. But at the outset, I want to make it perfectly clear: Our intention is to respect the collective bargaining process in Ontario.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I guess, there we have it. We heard the kind of wiggle words, to be polite, from the Premier—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Weasel words—not wiggle—weasel.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My colleague says, “weasel words.” You said you would consider all legislative or regulatory options, I think, were your words, Premier.

I did get a chance to, of course, read your budget and your budget papers. We’ve looked through Bill 55. I assume you have as well, Premier, and that’s why you didn’t answer me directly.

It’s not in Bill 55. There is no mandatory legislative wage freeze. Your spinners may be saying that, but it’s not in your bill, and in your answer to my opening questions, you refused to say that you’re going to bring any mandatory legislative pay freeze.

So, Premier, who’s right? Are your spinners right? Are you backtracking now? Why are you using these kind of wiggle words on such an important initiative?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague in fact recognizes, but refuses to acknowledge, that there is a decision or two from the Supreme Court of Canada which mandate that we make a genuine and sincere effort to consult and to enter into collective bargaining with our partners. We are doing that.

I would remind my honourable colleague as well that there are many people who are paying attention to our budget, including those in finance and economic institutions. And I would remind my honourable colleague that we received support from the TD Bank, Scotiabank, Royal Bank, Dominion Bond Rating Service, BMO Nesbitt Burns, Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Federation of Independent Business and Certified Management Accountants of Ontario.

They all recognize that it’s very important that we proceed to deal with compensation issues in a way that is firm, but they also like our approach, which is fair.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: On the second question of a number I’ll ask, I say the Premier is avoiding very direct questions. The Premier could not point out in his budget bill, Bill 55, what page the wage freeze is on because it doesn’t exist.

I’d ask the Premier back, then: If you don’t have it in your budget bill, can you point to exactly where in your budget papers or your budget speech you use the words “mandatory legislative pay freeze”?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I fully expect, given this line of questioning by my honourable colleague, that should it become necessary at some point in time for us to take advantage of other measures, I will have his support and the support of his party.

1040

But again, we believe, on this side of the House, that we have a responsibility to bargain fairly and firmly. We will do that, Speaker. Should those talks fail, then we’ll

look at other considerations. But we’ve made it clear from the outset. We have a specific plan in place. We will balance our budget by 2017-18, Speaker. Expenditures will rise by, on average, 1%—0.9 %, in fact, over the course of five years. We will do what is necessary to make sure that happens.

## ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier, Speaker: so, obviously a lot of wiggling, a lot of waffling, a lot of dancing from the Premier. Despite this stage-managed tough talk, you have no pay freeze in your bill, in your budget. I guess the Premier’s policy is: a wage freeze if necessary, but not necessarily a wage freeze. That’s the kind of lacklustre leadership we’re seeing from the Premier on this issue.

Our position is clear: a mandatory public sector wage freeze—no exceptions, no special deals, across the board. It will save \$2 billion. Premier, if you actually now believe in our position—and I don’t think you do—why are you using so many wiggle words in your rhetoric? Is that your position—a wage freeze if necessary sometime down the road but not necessarily a wage freeze?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, it may be that my honourable colleague has a plan for us to consider, and if he does, I’d be pleased to take a look at that. He might want to recommend me to specific pages of that particular plan, Speaker. But the fact of the matter is, they do not have a plan. We have a plan. It is thoughtful; it is responsible; it is prudent.

I would recommend to my honourable colleague page 69 and the ensuing pages, where we talk about a long-term plan for public sector compensation. We talk about bringing a balanced approach, Speaker, that respects the collective bargaining process, an approach that is “consistent with the protections afforded to collective bargaining under the Supreme Court of Canada’s interpretation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.”

I also draw to my honourable colleague’s attention that our fiscal plan provides no funding for incremental compensation increases for new collective agreements, Speaker. We make it perfectly clear that we intend to hold the line, and again I say to my honourable colleague that, should we ever require his support, we look forward to that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, that excerpt you just read on no additional compensation was the exact same thing, word for word, you had in your 2010 budget, and it was a dramatic failure—word for word. It was a simple cut and paste.

Premier, I did get a chance to read through the pages that you referenced. My pink and yellow highlighting is here. I’ll point you to page 74, the pages you reference and obviously have read. You say that you will “reach responsible settlements that are respectful of fiscal realities and also maintain vital public services.” You



would make a bureaucrat blush with that kind of soft language.

Mr. Speaker, not only do we need a wage freeze in this province; we need a wiggle freeze so we can actually nail the Premier down on where they stand on this issue.

So, Premier, you referenced page 68 and subsequent pages. Please point out, then, on page 68 and subsequent pages where you say “public sector wage freeze.”

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, my honourable colleague—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew will come to order.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I think we need to acknowledge and accept that my honourable colleague will be less than happy with any language, any approach, any initiative and any plan that was less than mean-spirited and vindictive and that found a way to attack our public servants. That's not how we work on this side of the House, Speaker. We believe in respecting the collective bargaining process. We believe in acknowledging and respecting a Supreme Court of Canada decision. We also feel a strong sense of accountability that we owe to all Ontarians, who are counting on us to get this done, counting on us to balance the budget. We will do what is necessary, Speaker, to make that happen.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** So, Speaker, I guess we revealed in short order here that when it comes to a so-called wage freeze, the emperor has no clothes. It's not in your bill. It's not in your budget papers, and you've actually refused to use the words, Premier, “mandatory, legislated pay freeze.”

You say, what kind of language would I be satisfied with? Well, Prime Minister David Cameron in the UK said he is asking the public sector to include a two-year pay freeze—clear language. President Barack Obama, in bringing forward his legislation, said he is proposing a two-year pay freeze for all civilian federal workers. British Columbia brought forward legislation.

Sir, you asked what kind of language I want. I'd like clear, direct language that actually tells us where you stand.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No wiggles.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** There are lots of examples. So, no more wiggling.

Where do we stand, Speaker? A mandatory public sector wage freeze for all of us to save \$2 billion—it'll work. Why don't you believe in that, Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We saw what that kind of approach got us during the Mike Harris years. We saw what that did to our public services. We saw what that did to our schools and to the education that afforded our children. We saw what that did to our health care system and how Ontario patients suffered as a result. We witnessed the hospital closures that ensued. We witnessed the endless strife that took place inside our publicly

funded school system. That's their choice. I'll leave it to them to prosecute that kind of an approach.

We have a decidedly different, respectful, determined, fair, balanced approach, in keeping with the values shared by Ontario families.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Be seated, please. Thank you. New question.

## JOB CREATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Over the past six days, families in Ontario have been sharing their thoughts about the budget, and I want to share a few with the Premier.

Dawn from Fort Erie says, “We are already struggling in a town where there [are] no jobs ... as the one last work industry is being closed. First they want to take jobs out of communities and then expect the people to live on less.”

The Premier has proposed a fund to distribute grants to business, but Ontario families have seen companies take handouts before and ship jobs away. My question is: Is the government ready to ensure that we're rewarding the job creators who will actually help women like Dawn find a job?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question from my honourable colleague, and I appreciate her thoughtful and considered approach.

A big dimension of our budget has to do with jobs: creating more jobs and building a stronger foundation for growth and prosperity. Specifically when it comes to investments in infrastructure, hospital investments in infrastructure will create 26,000 jobs per year for three years, on average. Our investment in post-secondary infrastructure creates 3,000 jobs per year for the next three years, on average. Our investment in the Pan Am athletes' village creates 5,200 jobs.

The northern Ontario heritage fund is to support 17,800 jobs. The eastern Ontario development fund, 1,900 jobs; our modernization of the gaming sector, 2,300 net new jobs, and another 4,000 new jobs in the hospitality and retail sectors—this budget is a lot to do with jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Listening to people and their priorities is very important. Daniel from LaSalle writes that he's concerned there's “no new job creation” in the budget, adding that the government “promised that there would be more jobs with [the] HST.”

With their HST and corporate tax scheme, the government promised 600,000 new jobs. Today, 600,000 Ontarians are looking for work.

Is the Premier ready to admit that their no-strings-attached corporate giveaways haven't been working and that people like Daniel need to see a more effective jobs strategy?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I just want to remind my honourable colleague that, just last week, we announced—actually, it was announced by the private sector—that



Toyota was creating 400 new jobs; Ford, 100 new jobs; GM, 300 new jobs. In each of those instances, those were the subject of continuing economic partnerships with the people of Ontario through the government. So I'd recommend to my honourable colleague that she recognize that, from time to time, these partnerships in fact work.

I also want to draw to my honourable colleague's attention the fact that we're creating a new jobs and prosperity fund. We're taking a look at all the ways that we've been supporting economic development in Ontario. We want to lend greater focus to those dollars and ensure that we're doing it in a way that creates jobs and enhances productivity in Ontario, which is a challenge for us.

So I say again to my honourable colleague: A big part of this budget has to do with jobs.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's not the way Ontarians see it, Mr. Speaker, and that's not the way New Democrats see it.

Nicholas from New Liskeard writes, "I think the budget does nothing for northern Ontario, where jobs are very hard to find and things like hydro and gas are getting more expensive with every day. And on top of this the sale of the Ontario Northland hurts the north even more; more jobs will be lost and not replaced."

People feel like they're falling behind. They want to see smart investments in infrastructure and real incentives to help companies that will actually create jobs. Instead, they see giveaway after giveaway after giveaway to companies that are simply shipping jobs away and, especially in the north, shipping resources away, too.

Does the Premier think his jobs plan is good enough for northerners like Nicholas?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again I say to my honourable colleague a few things. First of all, Toyota, GM, Ford and others are not shipping their jobs away; they're creating them right here.

Our budget commits to creating or protecting some 170,000 jobs. Over the course of the next three years, we're investing over \$30 billion in new infrastructure in Ontario, and I outlined just a moment ago where it is that we're going to make those investments.

I say to my honourable colleague, we would be more than willing to work with her as we lend shape to our new jobs and prosperity fund to make sure that it does exactly what we want it to do: to create jobs here, jobs that last, good jobs here in the province of Ontario, and also to ensure that we are improving our productivity as an economy generally, Speaker. That's the way for us to go. There's a broad consensus in that area, and I'm sure that we could work with my honourable colleague and all my colleagues opposite in that regard.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is for the Premier as well. I'm hearing from people all across the

province, and northern Ontarians are particularly concerned. As usual, the ripple effects of decisions that are made in Toronto have far-reaching impacts in the north.

Irene from Englehart wrote to say that the "McGuinty government seems to forget about northern Ontario. Whenever there are cuts, we northerners suffer." Suzanne from Virginiatown is concerned about access to health care.

What does the Premier have to say to northerners like Irene and Suzanne who feel threatened by the cuts to their way of life?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I appreciate the perspective shared by my honourable colleague, but I cannot accept it.

If you take a look at any number of areas, whether it's the northern Ontario heritage fund—which, by the way, we have carved out of that plan to establish a larger jobs and prosperity fund. We want to protect the northern Ontario heritage fund. It has proved to be very successful in terms of leveraging public dollars to land new investment and create thousands and thousands of jobs.

I'll remind my honourable colleague about our investment in a new medical school in northern Ontario, Speaker, with a campus shared by Thunder Bay and Sudbury. We're turning out our new graduates now, who are demonstrating a strong commitment and attachment to practising medicine in northern Ontario.

**Interjection:** A new law school.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We've got a new law school that we're building in northern Ontario; a new school of architecture that we're investing in Ontario. We have a special electricity rate for northern Ontario.

There are a number of ways we continue to demonstrate our abiding commitment to the people of northern Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The comments I'm raising are not just my perspective; they're the perspective of Ontarians, particularly those in the north.

Northerners are very, very worried, Speaker, about the economic prospects in the north. They're worried about the impact of the privatization of Ontario Northland, a vital, vital transportation link. They are justifiably frustrated, and have been for quite some time.

John from North Bay wrote to say that he doesn't appreciate "cutting jobs and services on the back of northern Ontario." What does the Premier have to say to northerners like John who are already having trouble making ends meet?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we can no longer afford to subsidize the ONTC. It was not an easy decision, but I think we need to be straight with the people who are affected by this particular service. We're going to divest it. We're going to work with the private sector and ensure that the necessary transportation options continue to be available to people in northern Ontario.

But I think there are all kinds of reasons to be optimistic about the future in the north. You know, I've learned



that last year was our best year ever when it comes to mining—over a billion new dollars invested in our mining sector. We've got the biggest mining sector in all of Canada.

We also understand that by working together with people in the north—and the Ring of Fire opportunity, Speaker. That represents the single biggest mining opportunity in Canada in over 100 years. We're convinced that we're going to garner billions of dollars of new investment and thousands of new jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, this Premier knows that around the world, transit systems are subsidized by governments because it's about moving people around. Northerners deserve to be moved around across their communities as well. They're not asking for more; they're just asking for an equal share.

Diane from Cochrane wrote to say that she can't help but feel that "northern Ontario appears to be less important to the McGuinty government." Her concern is serious, Speaker, and it is legitimate. She writes, "Help us to keep our jobs and continue to provide service to northern Ontario citizens." Will the Premier listen to northerners like Diane?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I think I've made it clear in my first two answers, by listing some of the specific initiatives that we have pursued, that we have a very strong commitment to northern Ontario.

Again, on the matter of the ONTC, it was not an easy decision. I think the extent of the subsidy—some \$400 per passenger—was simply something that we could no longer afford.

What we intend to do instead, Speaker, is to continue to invest in good schools in northern Ontario and good health care in northern Ontario. We will continue to invest in good highways in northern Ontario. We will continue to invest in a new school of architecture and a new law school in northern Ontario. We will continue to invest in a thriving mining sector in northern Ontario.

Again, we continue to find ways to invest and support a great quality of life and a strong future for northern Ontario.

#### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, in the past you've insisted that there's a constitutional impediment to a legislated public sector wage freeze; in fact, we heard the same thing from the Premier today as he tried to wriggle out of committing to one. But on page 1 of your department's news release dated March 27, you said, "Where agreements cannot be negotiated that are consistent with the plan to balance the budget and protect priority services, the government is prepared to propose the necessary administrative and legislative measures." Unfortunately, Minister, the details of this aren't contained in the actual budget. So would you please be clear with us now: Are you or are you not prepared to legislate a public sector wage freeze?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The budget itself is clear. The Premier's answer today is clear. We are working hard with our partners at the bargaining table. We have built into the fiscal plan numbers that see zero and zero. We've given mandates to the teachers' table, as well as our negotiations with the Ontario Medical Association. We are taking a balanced, reasonable approach that respects the Constitution and decisions taken in the Constitution, respects collective bargaining, respects the people on the other side of the table.

Mr. Speaker, this is the right approach. The numbers built into the budget contemplate zero and zero. We've laid out a plan to do it. There's no plan from that side of the House. Our plan is the right plan for Ontario, for a better future for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Well, with respect, that response is about as clear as mud. You've baffled the public, you're trying to baffle the opposition and I really think you've just confused yourself.

Both the Supreme Court of Canada, as you should know, and the Ontario Superior Court recognize that a public sector wage freeze can be legislated under pressing fiscal circumstances. With credit agencies breathing down our neck and with interest payments now our third-largest expenditure, it's very clear that Ontario is in dire economic circumstances. That's all not to mention the fact that Ontario's debt is three times higher than all other provincial deficits combined.

Minister, the constitutional myth has been debunked. You cannot hide behind it anymore. Ontarians deserve an answer. Will you legislate a public sector wage freeze? Yes or no?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, there's a reason the federal finance minister didn't legislate wage freezes. He understands the Constitution.

The Leader of the Opposition—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The purpose of me standing is not to give people silence to keep jabbing.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On both sides. Minister.

1100

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wants us to do what Barack Obama has allegedly done, and David Cameron. Unfortunately, they're not subject to the Supreme Court of Canada rulings. We've laid out a careful plan that respects those decisions. We've sought legal advice on all of these matters. We're respecting collective bargaining. We will take the appropriate steps—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### POWER PLANT

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, my question is to the Premier. On Friday, EIG Management, an investor in the

Greenfield power plant project in Mississauga, announced it was suing the Ontario government for \$300 million. The reason? Breach of contract, after your government, Premier, cancelled the Greenfield gas-fired power plant in the middle of an election campaign.

How much more, Premier, will your decision cost the public?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We intend to vigorously defend the statement of claim and the demand for damages brought by EIG. The Ontario Power Authority and Greenfield are continuing to have discussions about the relocation of this particular plant.

We were pleased to have the support of the NDP when the decision was made, and we thank the member for that.

Further comment wouldn't be appropriate because this matter is before the courts.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Well, Speaker, given that the Premier made the announcement, I think it would be incumbent on the Premier to actually answer this question.

In the court file, EIG alleged it was not given any warning that the gas plant was being cancelled until Premier Dalton McGuinty himself made the announcement in the middle of last fall's election campaign. According to the company, "There was no prior discussion or arrangement with respect to this announcement with either EIG or, to its knowledge, Greenfield."

Why can't the Premier give the public a sense of how much their last-ditch Liberal seat-saver decision is going to cost?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We were pleased to have the support of the NDP when the decision was made. And, as I recall, we were pleased to have the support of the opposition when the decision was made.

We will vigorously defend the statement of claim and damages issued by EIG, as everyone would expect that we would. There are ongoing discussions involving the Ontario Power Authority and Greenfield about relocating this particular plant.

It's appropriate we have reliable supply for all of the residents, and that's exactly what we intend to do.

## MUNICIPALITIES

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, last Tuesday the government tabled its budget, and it was a budget full of hard but very necessary decisions. There are more than 444 great municipalities in Ontario, including the two I represent in Pickering-Scarborough East. Minister, these municipalities are very dependent on our government support to deliver their services.

Speaker, will the minister please tell this House what the budget's impact on Ontario's municipalities is, and if the uploading of municipal costs will continue, given the tough choices that have to be made?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think everyone here knows that eliminating the deficit is the most important

thing we can do to move to economic growth. I want to assure my colleague from Pickering-Scarborough East, and all Ontarians, that nothing has changed. We are committed to honouring the promise that we made to our municipal partners. We will continue to upload services. We know we all have a role to play in the budget, and over the next three years, we will find savings. However, the municipal uploads will continue, Mr. Speaker. They're ongoing. They're on track, and that will mean \$1.5 billion more for our municipalities by 2018.

## Interjections.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You know, Mr. Speaker, the heckling from the other side suggests that there's no support for this, but I really believe that the worst thing that could happen for Ontarians right now is an election, Mr. Speaker. What we need is, we need support. We need to continue to work with our municipalities in a way that the members opposite never knew how to do. We need this budget to pass so we can upload those services.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Minister. It's great to hear that municipal uploading will continue and will in no way affect our efforts to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

Minister, you mentioned in your comments that the government is working with municipal partners in order to move forward and confront the challenges ahead. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: With the challenges that the proposed budget is attempting to face, will we continue to work as closely with our municipal partners as we have in the past?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think one of the most important things that a provincial government can do is to work co-operatively and collaboratively with municipalities so the 444 municipalities in this province know that they have a partner in this provincial government. That's why we're uploading the services that were downloaded by the previous government.

I have a couple of quotes. Gary McNamara, who is the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, says this: "Looking at the uploads, we are very pleased to see that being maintained." A friend of the government, I will say, Mr. Jim Watson, the mayor of Ottawa—here's what he says: "The government is honouring their commitment to keep the upload agreement in place.... We really put our lobbying efforts into the upload and also to make sure infrastructure projects they're already committed to continue to be funded."

Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

## AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Premier. For the past several weeks, the Minister of Health has been saying that the reason she shouldn't resign over the Ornge scandal is because she took decisive action to remove the board. But at last week's public accounts



committee, we learned that she did not remove the board. When asked why, after months of doing nothing, the minister was suddenly able to intervene at Ornge, the Deputy Minister of Health shocked us by saying, "the voluntary resignation of the board."

The deputy minister's statement stands in stark contrast to that of the minister and further erodes public confidence. Will the Premier hold the minister accountable and ask for her resignation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know the members of the opposition have put this very same question to both my honourable colleague the Minister of Health and myself on several occasions. My answer has not changed. I continue to have great confidence in Minister Matthews and the work that she is doing. We've spoken at length about her response, and I believe it was concrete, it was decisive and it did what needed to be done in terms of giving effect to the public interest.

I also want to remind my honourable colleague that Minister Matthews is not here today, for example, because she's out doing the people's work. She is, in fact, moving ahead with our action plan to transform health care in Ontario, which includes ensuring that we move more of the funding away from hospital-based care into home care and that we do other things to ensure that we continue to improve the quality of care for all our families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. That's correct, thank you.

Now, the tradition in this place is not to reference any attendance, regardless of whether or not it's one from one side or one from the other side. I would remind the Premier not to mention someone's attendance in this House.

I also want to take a moment to ask you to use your inside voices. We're getting into that yelling across at each other to try to drown each other out, and I would appreciate listening carefully to the answers.

Members should know that they are to be in their own seats if they are to make any response in this House.

**Supplementary?**

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Again to the Premier: Last Thursday, the Minister of Health said, "If I had known that the leadership at Ornge was going to create this remarkable web that would fill their pockets ... I would have acted sooner."

Mr. Speaker, she did know, but she didn't respond to any of the red flags that she did see.

So I ask you today: In light of the fact that this minister seems to be very confused about what she did and didn't do, in light of the fact that she ignored many of the red flags and the Auditor General has told us there was no oversight at Ornge, will the Premier now do the reasonable and honourable thing and ask for her resignation?

1110

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I say to my honourable colleague, no, I will not. I continue to have great confidence in Minister Matthews and the way that she continues to carry out her responsibilities. My honour-

able colleague knows that we have now learned that a number of members of the opposition parties were in fact fully briefed about some of the events that were unfolding at Ornge.

I continue to have confidence in Minister Matthews. She has acted in a decisive and thorough way. She brought in a team of forensic accountants. It has culminated in her sending the matter to the OPP. She has introduced new legislation that brings stronger oversight to bear over these kinds of activities. She has entered into a new performance agreement with the people at Ornge, all with a view to ensuring that we have in place the necessary oversight and controls and that we continue to protect the best quality of care for Ontarians.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. On March 21, the Minister of Health was asked if there were any red flags in the January 2011 letter from Ornge. The minister said, "Were there" red "flags? Yes, of course we continue to do the work. It eventually built up to the point where I called in a forensic audit team...."

But, on March 28, the very same question is asked. The minister's story changes. She denied seeing any red flags or doing anything about it. Does the Premier follow the Minister of Health's shifting story? Because I have a hard time with it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has had an opportunity to testify before the public accounts committee last week. I would point out that she was originally asked to come for one hour and in fact stayed two and a half hours so that she could talk about the action that she and the government have taken in terms of Ornge—action which has led to the replacement of the board, which has led to the replacement of the CEO. We have an acting CEO who is also there. She called in the forensic auditors. She called in the OPP. She replaced the performance agreement. There has been tough, new legislation that has been put forward.

We see the public accounts committee as an opportunity for the government and for representatives of the new administration of Ornge to talk about the decisive action that we've taken. We see these opportunities—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Back to the Premier. Well, the Premier's Minister of Health can't even get her own story straight. First, the opposition was assured that they were looking into Ornge, but that nothing was wrong—that they were stonewalled. Then she says that she was misled and there were facts that were hidden, and then that there were red flags but that it was everybody else's fault. Now, we're not really sure what story to believe. Why is the Premier letting the Minister of Health keep her job?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, as I say, we are committed, on this side of the House, to full transparency.

That's why the minister and other senior officials went in front of public accounts. That's also why the government has put forward a series of motions asking for opposition members to come forward in front of the public accounts committee to talk about what they knew and the red flags that they received, red flags that we know the New Democratic Party had—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. This is an interesting situation you've put me in. I'm hearing heckling from the side that is giving the answer and I'm hearing heckling from this side about somebody over in the corner. It's not helpful to all of us who are trying to hear.

Minister.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, the government has put forward a series of motions. For example, we recently learned that the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka, in June 2010, had a two-hour tour of Ornge which was facilitated by one Kelly Mitchell, a high-priced Tory lobbyist. We look forward to the opportunity, at the public accounts committee, to talk about the red flags that he received, the red flags that many of his colleagues and many—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## EDUCATION

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question, through you, is to the Minister of Education. The government tabled its budget for the upcoming year last week. I know that there were some tough decisions to be made, but the single most important step we can take to grow the economy is to balance the budget, which we're on track to do, for 2017-18. The government has restored public confidence in education, after years of neglect by the previous PC government.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please tell this House how she will protect the progress that we've made in education in Ontario in this fiscal climate?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I thank the member for the question, and in particular I thank the member from Scarborough Southwest for his advocacy on behalf of families in his community.

Speaker, in this budget, we made a conscious choice to protect the gains that Ontario had made in education: to protect full-day kindergarten, to keep our class sizes small and to keep more classroom teachers to ensure that our students could get everything that they needed inside the classroom. Our decisions struck a really careful balance and have found savings outside the classroom.

Last week, when we announced the funding for school boards, called the grants for student needs—the grants for student needs will be stable at \$21 billion. That preserves a \$6.5-billion, or 45%, increase to board funding since 2003.

We are proud of the gains that we have made in education, and we will keep moving forward—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Thank you to the minister for that response. In my riding, I've noticed that education is one of the most important things to my constituents. I understand that the grants for student needs have risen slightly this year.

In spite of that, I have constituents that are concerned about education funding. I know that people in my riding and across the province would like to better understand the impact of the budget on schools. Minister, what would you say to the people of my riding that have these concerns?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I have more good news, because for our students, funding will rise slightly this year to \$11,189 per pupil, up about \$4,000, or 55%, since we came to office.

Speaker, full-day kindergarten is not funded through grants for student needs. So, while we have stabilization of funding through the GSN, we will see an increase of about 1.5% this year, as a result of increased investments in all-day learning.

In spite of challenging economic times, we've protected the gains that we've made in education, we're keeping funding stable, and we are putting forward a clear choice to invest in our classrooms, support student achievement and smaller class sizes, and keep teachers in our classrooms.

I'm disappointed in the opposition, Speaker, because they've been talking about forcing an unnecessary election. I can tell you, for the families in Ontario that want to see education continue to succeed, that is the very last thing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. *Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would ask the member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound: The next time he will be asked to remove himself from the spot that he's not supposed to be in to heckle.

The member from Nipissing: New question.

## POWER PLANT

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, my question this morning is for the Minister of Energy. On Friday we learned that the US-based financing company for the Mississauga power plant has launched a \$300-million lawsuit against the Liberal government for the cancellation of the project, citing "breach of contract and conspiracy."

First you cancelled the Oakville power plant for purely political reasons; then, in the midst of the election, you cancelled the Mississauga power plant in what was widely viewed as a seat-saver program. Minister, will you now come clean with the Ontario taxpayers and tell us the true cost of cancelling these projects?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We were pleased to read, back during the campaign, on October 1 in the London Free Press, that the "PCs don't support building it," meaning the gas plant, so we're pleased to have that support on the record.



We're vigorously defending the statement of claim that EIG has issued. People are entitled to access to the courts, and we're entitled to our day and to vigorously defend it. We'll do that on behalf of the people of Ontario, and hopefully we'll have the support of the opposition in doing that.

The Ontario Power Authority and Greenfield are continuing to have discussions about the options that are available in this matter. Those discussions will go on. In the meantime, Speaker, we'll make sure that the people of Ontario—Mississauga, Etobicoke—have reliable power on which they can—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

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**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Minister, the statement of claim filed by EIG Management says, "There was no prior discussion or arrangement with respect to this announcement with either EIG, or to its knowledge, Greenfield." It also alleges the government and the OPA "conspired" to help stop the power plant and ensure it never became operational as intended by the agreement.

Minister, as this is likely the first in a long series of lawsuits that we can expect, isn't this lawsuit proof positive that your decision had nothing to do with our energy needs, but only satisfied the Liberals' political needs?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It's funny how the mind seems to drift in a few months, because during the election, they didn't want to build it; they supported our decision. Now, we get a little wiggle and a waffle. We're not really sure now.

Let's be very clear. We're vigorously defending the claim. We've asked for the support of the loyal opposition in vigorously defending the claim. I'm sure over the next weeks and months, my friend's going to read all sorts of allegations which are only that. They're unproven. They're not tested. They don't stand up.

We're going to vigorously defend the claim on behalf of the people of Ontario, and we really do appreciate the support the opposition has given for the cancellation and not building that particular gas plant.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. My constituent Beth Edwards has an 18-year-old son with autism. Beth is here in the gallery today. Taylor has been in hospital for four months while the family awaits placement for him to a group home. Taylor has violent outbursts, and Beth and her husband fear for the safety of their seven-year-old son.

Speaker, an \$800-a-day hospital bed is not the proper place for someone who doesn't need acute care. What will this minister do for Taylor and the hundreds of other young people like him who are languishing on wait-lists for care?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very aware of this case through media reports and MPP inquiries as the individual in question—due to the age, it actually falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Of course, I express my sympathies, and I think the sympathies of all members with the challenges that the family is facing.

As I say, the member has brought this case forward, but at the same time I think he realizes that as minister, it would be inappropriate for me to discuss the specifics of a case. But as always, we work with families in these situations to make sure that they have access to all the services that are available to them. We try to work with them to find a solution to, obviously, a very challenging situation.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly express my sympathies to the family.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, no one on that side of the House has worked with this family at all.

Today is world autism day. Awareness of autism spectrum disorder increases each and every day, and treatment methods continuously improve. Instead of improving services, this government has chosen instead to close facilities like Thistletown.

Last week, I wrote to two ministers asking them to intervene in this case. What Taylor needs urgently is care in an appropriate setting now. Why won't this government do the right thing for this family and countless other families and immediately provide the care that Taylor and others so desperately need?

**Hon. John Milloy:** As in all cases, the Ministry of Community and Social Services or, if relevant, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services—officials with that ministry work with families to assess the needs of the individual and to find out what are the options in terms of care moving forward.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, I cannot comment on the specifics of a case, but please, all members need to be assured that we explore every avenue to make sure that individuals know what options are available and what services are there.

When working with any clients or families, we certainly explore every opportunity. We present families with options. Rightly so, they have the opportunity to accept those options or ask us to continue looking for them.

Mr. Speaker, we are co-operating with all families who are in this situation and making sure that they have access to the full—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, I've heard from several agriculture students at the University of



Guelph. They want to know if there was clear support for agriculture in the budget that was introduced last week. I was pleased to see that though your ministry will be looking to find efficiencies in administration and service delivery, support for farmers remains strong. I know that a lot of farmers are pleased that the budget continues to support agriculture, despite the turbulent economic times.

Through you, Speaker: Minister, can you share the response that the agricultural community has given over the support for agriculture in the budget?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I sure can. In fact, I'm very, very proud of the response of the agricultural community. I'm delighted to report that in the Simcoe Reformer, Mark Wales, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, had this to say: "It's good to see that agriculture is getting this kind of support."

Speaker, I want every member of this Legislative Assembly to know that our government is committed to working with the entire value chain, agri-chain, to seize the potential to further develop the agricultural sector and to build an even stronger agricultural sector in this great province of ours.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Minister, I know that many of the farmers were also watching the budget to see what would happen to the risk management program that we delivered for them in the 2011 budget. This is an important program, one that gives farmers the predictability they need. I know that farm groups who met with me were certainly very anxious that risk management continue.

Minister, this year's budget maintains support for risk management programs while also initiating a conversation with agricultural stakeholders on how to make the program predictable for government as well.

Speaker, through you, could the minister provide this House with the reaction of farmers and farm leaders to the continuation of the risk management program in our budget?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to respond to that great question. I thank the member from Guelph for it.

Here's what the Christian Farmers of Ontario stated. Their president, Lorne Small, said, "Ontario's farm organizations and government have worked hard to develop this program and the CFFO is willing to work equally hard at making the necessary changes. We believe that the program should meet both the needs of farmers and the new reality of the province's financial situation."

Mr. Speaker, we worked hard with our agri-sector partners to build this program, and we'll work hard to make sure it is a wonderful indicator of our success in agriculture in Ontario going forward.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is for the Premier. The budget does nothing to slow the ballooning deficit of this province. As Drummond predicted, we are heading for a \$30-billion deficit.

Your budget does nothing to create jobs. As Jack Mintz points out, the freeze on corporate tax rates will actually cost us 30,000 jobs.

What's worse, your budget threatens to jeopardize resource sectors, which are so vital to Ontario's future. Threatening increases in mining taxes and adding mining to the water-taking permit process sends all the wrong signals to industry.

Premier, just how much more do you plan to squeeze out of the mining sector to fuel your spending addiction?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I'm proud that Ontario has the lowest royalties and mining taxes in Canada. That is simply a fact, like so many others, that the official opposition chooses to ignore.

Let's just take a look at what some other people have said about our budgets. "We strongly support their efforts to eliminate the deficit." That's Janet Ecker, president of the Toronto Financial Services Alliance. There's a former Ontario finance minister who actually knows what she's talking about, unlike certain others who can't seem to keep themselves under control.

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We welcome the support of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and a variety of others whom I'll quote from. I'm proud that Ontario is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Again to the Premier: Last week, we had more of an instance of how you manage the resource sector. You actually paid a business \$3.5 million to go away because you've shirked your responsibility to consult. You've closed half of the north to exploration. You won't take the lead on your obligation to consult with First Nations. You won't move ahead on the Ring of Fire, the richest resource find in recent history, and you're about to stick it to industry again, just like you did when you added the diamond tax.

So my question to the Premier: Why would any mining company even think about coming to Ontario when Quebec has put out the welcome mat with their Plan Nord?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** There's a simple answer to that question: because it's the best jurisdiction in the world to invest in. That's why we have \$1 billion worth of exploration taking place in the province of Ontario. That's why we have more mining companies—I believe that last year there were 249 companies investing in exploration here—more than any other province in the country. That's why jurisdictions all over the world see Ontario as the premier place to invest in, and that's why the president of the Ontario Mining Association said that he was very, very satisfied with the budget that was presented last week.

## ONTARIO PLACE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Premier. On February 1, Minister Chan announced the closure of Ontario Place and the appointment of an advisory panel to recommend its future. Part of the announcement was a pre-budget retraction of funding for this popular venue. The minister has ensured that the public will not have direct contact with his advisory panel by requiring all input, including that of MPPs, to be vetted through his ministry.

Will the Premier tell his minister to open the process, at least giving a nod to transparency, and ensure that all Ontarians have direct access to the advisory panel?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thanks very much to the honourable member for the question. We have engaged the opposition member. As well as that, we have listened to the opposition member and suggested to him that he should engage the advisory panel.

We are moving aggressively forward to kick-start the revitalization of Ontario Place. Our aim is to make Ontario Place a must-visit destination and landmark for Ontario families and tourists from around the world. We are transforming Ontario Place so it can realize its full potential and economic potential as a signature landmark in Ontario. A new Ontario Place is part of our government's plan to grow tourism through investment and to stimulate our economy, create jobs and develop new opportunity and experience for tourists.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary? The member from Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Minister, I've heard a bunch of rumours around the neighbourhood that Premier Dad has a gambling addiction, and that instead of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. The member knows that that's not an appropriate title.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I heard that the Premier has a gambling addiction, and that, instead of taking his kids to Ontario Place, which is a beautiful park, he's going to the casino. Needless to say, I am worried, and families are incredibly worried, about him and the government. Even Dr. Kevin Stolarick, a director of the Martin Prosperity Institute, told us at a meeting that the social costs are two to eight times higher than the presumed benefits.

Should the rumours be true that the government is skulking about with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. to create a casino at Ontario Place, will you at least commit to have a referendum so people can have a say?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I appreciate the honourable member's question. Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker: We would have full opportunity for participation by all Ontarians, all citizens of the GTA, in any decision or potential decision.

The member opposite was part of a government that brought casino gaming to Ontario. I know he supported that at the time. His federal colleague Mr. Comartin has a bill before the Senate—it has been passed by the House—

supported by all New Democrats, welcoming sports betting into our resort casinos. I think Mr. Comartin has shown real leadership and courage on that issue and has had a consistent position on casino gaming throughout his career.

I wouldn't suggest that my friend opposite is being inconsistent, but there will be a lot of opportunity for all members of the public to participate, and we look—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## MÉTIS NATION

**Mr. Grant Crack:** My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Many Ontarians, including many of my constituents in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, when learning about the history of the Métis people here in Canada, only learn about the community's contribution in Manitoba. However, it's important to recognize that right here there's a significant Métis presence and population in Ontario.

Last fall it was an honour for me to attend the Louis Riel Day celebrations here at Queen's Park. I, like many others, learned a lot about the contributions of our Métis to our country, more specifically here in Ontario.

Speaker, I believe it's important that we all become aware of the significant role of the Métis in Ontario's rich heritage, and recognize their important contributions. Can the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs please tell us what our government is doing to recognize the contributions of the Métis people and to celebrate their distinct culture and heritage?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I really appreciate the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell asking a question and recognizing the importance of Métis culture in Ontario. I agree with him that it's really important that we recognize the unique contributions that Métis people have made to Ontario. That's why we tabled the motion in the Ontario Legislature recognizing 2010 as the Year of the Métis and the unique history that the Métis people have lived in Ontario.

This past November 17 marked the third anniversary of the signing of the historic framework agreement between the Ontario government and the Métis Nation of Ontario. That agreement signified a new way of doing business with Métis people. We really recognize that economic development is the cornerstone of that relationship, and that's why, last June, my colleague Minister Bentley, the former Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, announced that the Ontario government is providing up to \$30 million over 10 years to the Métis Voyageur development fund to support Métis economic development.

There's a lot we're doing, Mr. Speaker. I know you have a personal and avid interest in this subject, and I think it's something that we all need to more aware of.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order from the Minister of Agriculture.



**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Mr. Speaker, contingent with the standing House rules, I rise to correct my record, in part of the answer.

While Mr. Small had many good things to say about our government and such, the quote I attributed to him should properly be attributed to Nathan Stevens, their director of policy development. So I want to correct the record.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As the member knows, that is a point of order. All members have the opportunity to correct their record, and I thank the member for doing so.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure today to introduce to members of the House—in the gallery today we have a city councillor from my riding of Nepean—Carleton, a city councillor from the city of Ottawa, Scott Moffatt. He's one of the youngest city councillors in Ottawa. He is joined also in the gallery by the executive director of the business improvement area in Bells Corners in Nepean—Carleton, Alex Lewis, who is very excited to have been introduced.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Oh, no.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'd better explain that. The member for Willowdale is not standing to introduce a visitor.

Further introductions?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd also like to welcome for the afternoon session our MPPs for the day, McKenna Seebach and Hendrik Rolleman. Welcome, and enjoy the afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member from Kitchener—Conestoga for his introduction.

The member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm waiting for my constituents, or at least they're citizens of Ontario: Dr. John Astles, Dr. Jeff Goodhew and Dr. Lareina Yeung, who are with the Ontario Association of Optometrists. They're with us today and I'll be introducing a private member's bill on their behalf.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### MPP FOR A DAY

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm pleased to share with you today the details of my new MPP for a Day program in Kitchener—Conestoga. As part of my local election platform, I committed to establishing an MPP for a Day

program to provide local youth with an opportunity to experience provincial government first-hand.

I'm happy to report that today is the official launch of our MPP for a Day program. I'd like to welcome MPPs for the day McKenna Seebach and Hendrik Rolleman.

Here's how the program works: Every month the Legislature sits one grade 6 or 7 student and one grade 8, 9 or 10 student will be selected to come to Queen's Park to experience a day in the life of an MPP. As MPPs for the day, they will be introduced in the Legislature, attend question period, take a special tour of Queen's Park, sit in meetings, attend receptions, as well as receive a certificate recognizing their time as MPP for Kitchener—Conestoga.

Interested students can visit my website at [michaelharrismpp.ca](http://michaelharrismpp.ca) to download an application. For students in grades 6 and 7, the application asks six questions, such as why would they be good as an MPP for a day. For students in grades 8, 9 and 10, there are eight questions, one of which asks, "If you could change one thing in Ontario today, what would it be?"

The goal of this program is to further help youth involvement in our community and to encourage tomorrow's new leaders.

### ESSEX 73'S

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It is in the light of good sportsmanship that I am pleased to congratulate the Essex 73's on their 16th Great Lakes Junior C Championship last night, March 27—well, it wouldn't be last night, but 2012—against the Belle River Canadiens with a 3-1 victory at a packed arena with attendance of 1,136 people.

They'll now go on to the Schmalz Cup. This is their 39th season that they've been competing—since 1973. They have also had six Schmalz Cup wins and have competed in 11 all-Ontario Junior C Championships. They are the most successful team in Junior C in all of Ontario.

Gil Langlois is head coach and Scott Miller, general manager, and the team, I want to congratulate them.

It's particularly difficult for me, Mr. Speaker, as a former Belle River Canadien, having played minor hockey in Belle River and knowing the enormous rivalry that there is between Belle River and Essex. I stand here today as a humble former Canadien and I wish them the utmost congratulations on their efforts. Congratulations, and best wishes as they continue through to the Schmalz Cup.

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to be able to rise today in the House and issue a thank you to our volunteers who give so generously of their time and efforts to make all our communities a better place to live, and in particular for me in Etobicoke, with such folks as Janice Etter from Montgomery's Inn; Basketeers, by

Cheryl Stoneburgh; choral music—Harry Learoyd, the former principal has been contributing for many years; Tzu Chi Foundation Buddhist Compassion Relief, who come in and work in our long-term-care home; the Village of Humber Heights, which has the opportunity to work with young people; the Canadian Diabetes Ukrainian chapter; Canes; St. James Food Basket; Dorothy Ley Hospice—22,000 volunteer hours; Kiwanis Club Humber Valley, who are having their meeting this week, and it will be 35 years that they have had Meals on Wheels; the Rotary entrepreneur club for students; and Volunteers Etobicoke.

To the parents, the faith community, the churches and just the regular folks in the community who make an enormous contribution each and every day, often without the kind of thanks they so generously deserve for their work, I'd like to say thank you: Thank you on behalf of all the people in Etobicoke, thank you on behalf of myself and thank you for contributing to making a great deal of difference in the lives of so many people in our wonderful community of Etobicoke.

#### OPTOMETRISTS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I rise today to welcome the Ontario Association of Optometrists, OAO. They are hosting an advocacy day here at Queen's Park.

Since 1909, the OAO has been assisting optometrists across the province, providing the highest standard of eye care and vision care. They have worked tirelessly to raise awareness about the importance of regular eye exams and good eye health through their focus on advocacy, community and education.

I want to also applaud the OAO for their focus on, and support for, children's vision through the Eye See ... Eye Learn program. The program recognizes the important link between eye health and learning. If children can't see the board or read the book in front of them, they will face great difficulties in learning. The program helps parents get their children proper eye exams before entering grade 1, and access to glasses if needed.

I want to issue a warm welcome to Dr. Sheldon Salaba, president of OAO, and to a former colleague of ours, a member of the Legislature and past Minister of Health, the Honourable Cam Jackson, who now serves as CEO of OAO.

Shortly, I will be introducing a private member's bill in support of optometrists across Ontario. If passed, my bill would give optometrist corporations the same opportunities that are available to other health professional corporations. It will allow family members to partner in small business to allow them non-voting shares.

I welcome the OAO to the Legislature today and hope my colleagues will join me in supporting eye care professionals across Ontario.

#### ONTARIO PLACE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, as I stated in my question to the Premier this morning, his government's sudden

closure of Ontario Place attractions and the withdrawal of funding at a time when attendance and revenues are up has left many leery of what is really planned for this site. Our efforts to provide input directly to the Premier's appointed advisory panel have been stonewalled by the minister. The minister's response to my question this morning showed a complete unwillingness to understand that Ontarians demand transparency and open access to those advising this government.

Ontario Place has been the jewel in Ontario's tourism crown for years. It has been owned by the people of Ontario, and started out as an affordable day's fun for all the family. Many of us remember picnicking with our families and friends on the grassy hills around the Forum, listening to Canadian musicians. Others spent hours with their children on many rides and water activities, all for the price of admission.

Now, if the rumours are true, Speaker, our much-loved Ontario Place, our family attraction, will lose its family centre and attract only those who wish to gamble. I implore the Premier: Open up the input process so that all Ontarians can have an unvetted say in the future of Ontario Place. This is a very important issue to the people of Ontario.

#### FANNIE DESFORGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Thank you, Speaker, and my honourable colleagues as well. I rise today very proud to congratulate Fannie Desforges, who lives in Fournier, Ontario, in my riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

A couple of weekends ago in March, Fearless Fannie, a nickname she has earned, skated her way to victory at the 2012 Red Bull Crashed Ice World Championship in Quebec City. She outskated last year's winner, who is from Finland, and a fellow Canadian.

Crashed Ice is an extreme winter race sport that involves skating downhill in an urban environment, in this case the beautiful city of Quebec, la ville de Québec, on a track that includes steep turns and high vertical drops. This sport requires not only great physical demands, but athletes must think fast and stay focused.

#### 1310

On the night of her victory, Fannie burst out of the gate, giving herself the all-important lead position, and skated to victory untouched in front of over 100,000 cheering fans.

I would like to again congratulate world champion Fannie Desforges on her victory in Quebec. Félicitations, Fannie.

#### KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2012

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'm here to tell you about another big win. Thousands, if not millions, of people were glued



to Hockey Night in Canada on the CBC on Saturday night—not an unusual stat at this time of year—but in my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings, specifically in my home community of Stirling, the anticipation was extremely high.

They weren't tuned in to see if the Leafs were going to make the playoffs—that's already been determined—or another Montreal Canadiens shootout loss. It was about a year ago actually that Stirling resident Cindy Brandt put together a committee with a common goal of making Stirling-Rawdon Hockeyville 2012.

On Saturday, at 10:48 p.m., all the hard work and nearly four million votes had paid off as the little village with the big heart was officially named Hockeyville.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you very much. There's nothing big about Stirling, except for its heart actually. The little municipality of just under 5,000 has a welcome sign out front, boasting some pretty tough NHL players, like Matt Cooke who played for the 2009 Pittsburgh Penguins and still does to this day, Rob Ray, a long-serving tough guy with the Buffalo Sabres, and a number of others.

It's also home to Ontario's smallest police service, a dear little Stirling Festival Theatre and a great agricultural museum there for Hastings county as well.

We lost a local legend in the past year. He was the long-time arena manager—over 30 years—and for 40 years a minor hockey volunteer in Stirling. Barry Wilson left us. I know he was looking down on Saturday night and very proud of what happened in Stirling.

I know the community arena is a gathering place for residents in all of our communities, and it certainly will be in Stirling on October 3 as the Toronto Maple Leafs take on the Columbus Blue Jackets.

So, congratulations to everybody in Stirling on being named Hockeyville 2012.

#### LEADING WOMEN, BUILDING COMMUNITIES AWARDS

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Today, I would like to recognize Karen Peach and May Ye Lee, two very special women who were awarded Leading Women, Building Community awards this past Thursday for their work in the riding of Scarborough–Agincourt.

Karen Peach has served as the principal at David Lewis Public School for 11 years. She has been instrumental in building her school into one of the finest educational environments in the province of Ontario. In 2011, the school received the Dr. Bette M. Stephenson Recognition of Achievement award for the effective use of EQAO data to enhance student learning.

Karen works towards building confidence and a positive mindset among her student body. She's a mentor to her staff and provides essential leadership and support to her female staff and students.

May Ye Lee is a prominent and respected lawyer in the Scarborough community who's continuously reaching out to those who are most vulnerable, including new immigrants and elderly members of the Chinese community. She's a former member of the Scarborough Hospital Foundation and Scarborough hospital.

As a lifelong advocate of organ and tissue donation, May currently sits on the board of the Trillium Gift of Life Network. She also founded the Chinese Outreach Committee to encourage Scarborough's Chinese community to become more engaged in local health issues.

Prosperous communities are built around those who are dedicated to improving the world around them. I'm proud to have these two wonderful women working to continue to build and make Scarborough–Agincourt a great place to live.

#### OPEONGO HERITAGE CUP

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What a great weekend of hockey at the Paul J. Yakabuski Community Centre in Barry's Bay for the seventh annual Opeongo Heritage Cup.

The Opeongo Heritage Cup is a multicultural tournament contested each year by players with roots in the Bonnechere and Madawaska valleys who have Polish/Kashubian, Irish, German/Wendish or Algonquin First Nation ancestral ties.

This year, the fans were treated to perhaps the most tightly contested tournament ever. Each and every game was competitive to the end as the players gave their all, vying for the championship, symbolic of cultural hockey supremacy in the valley.

The quality of hockey in this tournament is top-notch. The rosters included ex-NHLer Rod Schutt playing for the German team, as well as a number of players with OHL experience, among them, Sudbury Wolves player Sam Schutt, who is also Rod's nephew.

The MVP of the tournament was Will Hourigan, who happens to be the nephew of Haldimand–Norfolk MPP Toby Barrett.

On a sad note, the honorary captain of the Irish Shamrocks, Phil Conway, a tremendous community-minded person with a long history in the valley and a current member of the municipal council, passed away on Tuesday, March 27. Phil was always an integral part of this tournament, and he will be missed greatly, not only at the Heritage Cup, but everywhere in the valley.

In Sunday's thrilling final pitting the German Black Eagles against the Irish Shamrocks, I have no doubt that Phil was providing somewhat of an assist to his compatriots. In a game that went down to the wire, the Shamrocks reclaimed the crown that had been held by the Algonquin Thunderbirds for the past three years.

Congratulations to all, and a big thank you to David Shulist and all the volunteers who gave so much of their time to make the event another smashing success.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AMENDMENT ACT (OPTOMETRY PROFESSIONAL CORPORATIONS), 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PROFESSIONS DE LA SANTÉ RÉGLEMENTÉES (SOCIÉTÉS PROFESSIONNELLES D'OPTOMÉTRIE)

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 59, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 59, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am appreciative that the Ontario Association of Optometrists are here today. They brought this to my attention because it's simply a matter of fairness and equity.

The preamble is, "The bill amends the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, with respect to a corporation's eligibility to hold a certificate of authorization issued by the College of Optometrists of Ontario. Currently, a regulation under the act sets out conditions that a corporation must satisfy to be eligible for a certificate of authorization. All those conditions require that all the corporation's shares must be owned by one or more members of the college. The new section 35.1 of the act"—I'm finding it difficult—"provides that a corporation's non-voting shares may be owned by a family member of a member of the college who owns voting shares in the corporation or the trust for the minor children of a member of the college who owns voting shares of the corporation."

This is a matter of fairness, and I suspect that it will be supported by the Legislature.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I rise to recognize World Autism Awareness Day. Every year, on April 2, we join together to promote a greater understanding of autism and to celebrate the accomplishments of the remarkable people living with autism.

I want to start by paying tribute to all those who work on a daily basis to make a difference in the lives of people with autism: the front-line workers, the advocates, parents, family members and researchers who all help people with autism reach their potential. I want to

especially pay tribute to the children, youth and adults living with autism for overcoming extraordinary challenges and for their remarkable contributions that they make to our province and to our communities.

In Ontario, they have exceptional advocates like Marg Spoelstra, executive director of Autism Ontario, who was recently named a member of the Order of Canada in recognition of not only a lifetime of dedication to the community, but for her advocacy on behalf of people with autism and their families.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is quickly becoming a world leader in the area of autism research. One example is the Province of Ontario Neurodevelopmental Disorders Network project. This project will study neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism spectrum disorder, and it's causing great excitement in the scientific world. The research team is creating the first-ever Canadian clinical trials to better understand the causes and the symptoms of autism and to speed up access to new treatments.

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Mr. Speaker, on this World Autism Awareness Day, know that our government is committed to making a difference for people with autism and for their families. In the last eight years, our government has more than quadrupled autism investments. We have broadened the range of supports and services available to children, youth and adults with autism and for their families. We have made substantial investments in intensive behavioural intervention, or IBI, a treatment that benefits children at the severe end of the autism spectrum.

Since 2010, transition teams have been on the ground in all school boards across Ontario so that children and youth can transition smoothly into the school environment and have every opportunity to succeed. Parents and caregivers are receiving much-needed respite services, including March break and summer camp programs.

Mr. Speaker, we are on track to have 8,000 young people a year with autism spectrum disorder benefit from new applied behaviour analysis, or ABA, based services, services that help them develop communication, social and daily living skills, and manage better in school. These are important programs, programs that will make a real difference in the lives of families, but I know that we have more work to do.

I had the privilege of visiting Surrey Place last week, the lead agency here in Toronto for our government's autism intervention program. There, I saw the rollout of our ABA services in action. I saw the dedication of talented therapists and clinicians. I saw the immense amount of love, Mr. Speaker, that parents have for their beautiful children, the pride they have in them and the commitment they have to helping them succeed and reach their full potential.

Seeing the program in action really inspired me and it made me proud of the difference that our programs are making in the lives of families across this great province. It made me proud of these kids for all that they've been able to accomplish: for confronting challenges and overcoming them, for the contributions that people with



autism make to our communities and to our province; and it made me proud of the parents who work so hard, every hour of every day, to help their kids reach their full potential, who stand up for their kids and advocate on their behalf, who do what's right and what's best to secure their kids' future, providing them with hope and opportunity.

So, Mr. Speaker, on World Autism Awareness Day, let us all join with others across the globe and right here in Ontario as we recommit ourselves to that important goal: helping individuals with autism reach their full potential, with dignity and respect for them and for their families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Responses? The member for Burlington.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** It is an honour to rise and speak on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus on the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day. I'd like to thank the Minister of Children and Youth Services, and I echo your heartfelt remarks.

This day is a relatively new phenomenon. In 2012, we mark just the fifth anniversary of this occasion. We are, of course, accustomed to newness. More than a decade into the 21st century, it's not usual for us as people to feel a sense of accomplishment. We live in a time of sparkling scientific advances and astounding technologies, but for all of that, there is much that we still do not know. We don't know what causes autism. We can't say we might cure it.

But we do know that earlier childhood intervention can make a tremendous difference in an individual's quality of life. We know that research continues to reveal insights into this condition, and we know that popular ignorance of autism spectrum disorders is often more limiting than the condition could ever be.

Autism spectrum disorders are a set of conditions with common symptoms. These symptoms include difficulties with verbal and non-verbal communications, social interaction and engaging in conversations or collaborative activities. Individuals with ASD may exhibit symptoms in different combinations and in ways that range from minor to complex. We should see none of them as an impossible challenge. With humility and compassion, we can view the world through the eyes of others, and when we do, we see that autism alone does not deny someone a full and fruitful life. It is the society that fails to knock down barriers to opportunity that shackles individuals with ASD.

World Autism Awareness Day challenges us to confront the stigma and stereotypes around autism. It also asks us to denounce discrimination and appreciate autism spectrum individuals for their great hope and courage, unique gifts and potential. Finally, it asks that we mobilize efforts to make things better. Part of this engagement and public awareness must unfortunately be the realization that we have quite a distance to go, and that those with autism spectrum disorders are still among the most vulnerable and ill served of all Ontarians.

The system needs to do a better job of supporting parents and families as well as improving options and

opportunities for individuals with autism. We all have a role to play.

The first World Autism Awareness Day was celebrated in 2008, a year that was the 60th anniversary of the United Nations declaration of human rights. Since then, the chorus of support for the cause and the children and youth living with autism has given rise to hope of a better world, one where all have a contribution to make and all of us are uniquely gifted. It is a message that the United Nations has promoted throughout its history and one that speaks to all people, all classes, races and ethnic groups.

This message has been given wings by many groups, and I'd like to spotlight one. Autism Ontario, established nearly 40 years ago, is a wonderful organization that has long championed the importance of acceptance and inclusion of individuals with autism spectrum disorders. In doing so, the group has pressed for ever greater opportunities for those individuals, in the conviction that empowerment can transform lives and the bedrock belief that everyone should have the support to build a life as a respected member of society.

There are many reasons for adopting that point of view. The number of Ontarians with autism spectrum conditions continues to rise, across all groups in society. If the status quo is unchanged, autism trends will obviously express themselves in growing costs.

Impacts to health care, social services and the education system are substantial and will only grow over time. But World Autism Awareness Day is not about bottom line costs. It's about the costs that we cannot calculate. It's about the value that extends beyond all reckoning, when we work together to create a more inclusive and supportive world. Let us continue to do so with courageous hearts and open minds.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I am very pleased to rise in the House today to recognize World Autism Awareness Day.

First, I would like to thank Tina Fougere, a dedicated autism activist in the Hamilton area. Tina is also the president of the Canadian National Autism Foundation, and it was she who provided me with the jigsaw ribbons distributed to all members earlier today.

I would like to recognize the work of Autism Ontario and their dedication to their stated mission: to ensure that each individual with ASD is provided the means to achieve quality of life as a respected member of society.

On a personal level, I would also like to thank President Leah Milchin and Executive Director Marg Spoelstra for taking the time to meet with me as the new NDP critic for children and youth services.

Today is World Autism Awareness Day, but I would like to take a moment to recognize all of those for whom every day is autism awareness day. There are so many who devote themselves to raising public awareness, many of them parents of children with autism, and they do so at the same time as living with the never-ending demands and challenges that this disorder has inflicted on their families.

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We all love our children. For some of us, that means throwing a ball around in the park or enjoying family dinners together. For others, it means showing tough love, taking on our children when we see them going astray and needing a more determined approach from us.

But for some, the love of their children means countless sleepless nights. It means constantly, carefully guiding their children through social situations, situations considered normal by most of us but, for their child, a terrifying new experience each and every time. Love of their children means having to fight endlessly for the rights of their child to live the most productive life possible. It means fighting for the services their children so badly need.

Just three years ago, it was said that autism existed in one in about 160 births. Autism Ontario now reports that figure to be 110 births. Recently, reports out of the US put the figure at one in 88. The numbers just continue to rise. We know that early screening is the most important aspect of treatment. We need to be aware of that when we see the waiting list for treatment and reflect on the opportunities that are being missed by delayed treatment.

Autism is a lifelong condition that can be helped enormously with early intervention. As those children move into the school system and on into adulthood, we need to make sure that they have a seamless, integrated system all through their lives. That means making sure that various ministries involved are working closely together in concert so that government can meet the needs of those with ASD.

I would also like to take some time to address the autism intervention program. There can be no doubt that it works wonders in a number of cases, but we must also be aware that each autism case is different. It is a complex disorder, and the necessary treatment will vary from child to child. We need to regularly evaluate the AIP to make sure it is meeting its stated goals and objectives. We know there are many skilled and dedicated professionals working within the AIP, but we need to also know that we can learn from the experiences of each other. We need to keep in place the programs that are working and change those that are not, and we need to recognize the importance of involving families in those decisions.

Just yesterday, there was a rally to protest the closure of Thistletown Regional Centre, a centre that serves individuals with some of the most complex issues at the severe end of ASD. Deep concerns have been raised about the impact of this closure on those who rely on Thistletown's services. They worry about the changing programs that have been working for many years, and they worry that established relationships—years in the making, vital to the treatment—will just disappear. They worry that they were not consulted before the decision was announced.

We need to work together, all of us in this Legislature, along with the program providers and especially those with autism and their families, not just to raise awareness

but also to make sure we are providing the best possible service.

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

“Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

“Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets at Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately.”

I wholeheartedly agree, attach my signature and give it to page Seph.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Bill Walker:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the horse racing industry employs approximately 60,000 people, creates \$1.5 billion in wages and \$2 billion in recurring expenditures annually; and

“Whereas the partnership that was created between government and the horse breeding and racing industry has been a model arrangement and is heralded throughout North America, with 75% of revenues going to the provincial government to fund important programs like health care and education, 5% to the municipalities and only 20% goes back to the horse business; and

“Whereas the horse business is a significant source of revenue for the farming community and rural municipalities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Finance continue the revenue-sharing partnership with the horse racing industry for the benefit of Ontario's agricultural and rural economies.”

I support this petition, will affix my name and send it with Victoria to the clerks' desk.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I, too, rise to present a petition on behalf of the horse racing industry that reads:

“Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;



"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I will sign it and deliver it to you through page Hassan.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition that's addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows.

"Whereas a progressive Ontario budget calls for bold and decisive deficit reduction action to ensure that Ontario remains the most attractive and competitive place in North America to set up or relocate a business, raise a family or build a career; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has introduced a budget that sets out a five-year deficit reduction, leading to a balanced budget by fiscal year 2017-18, while preserving Ontario's progress in infrastructure, health care and education; and

"Whereas the 2012-13 Ontario budget proposes \$4 of expense reduction for every dollar raised in new revenues, with such expense reduction including implementation of key recommendations in the Drummond report, eliminating overlap and duplication, and compensation restraint in the Ontario broader public sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the elected members of all parties support the comprehensive set of financial measures and expense reductions proposed in the 2012-13 Ontario budget to enable Ontario to balance its budget on schedule; enhance its world-leading position; and attract, build and retain the people, careers and companies to build a strong Ontario for generations to come."

I'm pleased to sign and to support this petition, and to ask page Emma to carry it for me.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's my distinct pleasure—but it's with a great deal of sadness that I read this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity," mostly in my riding of Durham;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario" of Dalton McGuinty;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs" in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on" Premier McGuinty's "government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I'm pleased to sign it and support it on behalf of my constituents, and present it to Alexander, one of the pages.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I have another 1,300-odd petitions here. They're coming in by the thousands.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I agree with this, I'll affix my name to it and Asha will bring it down.

1340

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** This is a petition to the Legislature of Ontario from parents in Ottawa–Orléans, for the Avalon Public School.

"Whereas the current enrolment of Avalon Public School is 687 students;

"Whereas the student capacity of the school is 495 students, as determined by the Ministry of Education's own occupancy formula;

"Whereas the issue of overcrowding and lack of space makes it impossible for Avalon Public School to offer full-day kindergarten until the overcrowding issue is addressed;

"Whereas Avalon Public School is located in a high-growth community;

"Whereas the enrolment at Avalon Public School is expected to continue rising at a rate of 10% to 15% a year for the foreseeable future;

"Whereas the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board has made building a new school in Avalon a top capital priority;

"We, the undersigned, call on the province of Ontario and Ministry of Education to provide the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board with the necessary funding to build an additional school in Avalon, to open no later than September 2014."

I agree with this petition and send it forward with Domenique.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I proudly sign my name to this petition.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition from the people of Walden, which includes Naughton, Whitefish and Lively.

"Whereas the Ontario government" has made PET scanning "a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with" Health Sciences North, "its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine"—many of their members are here today, Mr. Speaker;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through" Health Sciences North, "thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask page Emily to bring it to the Clerk.

### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a report from Ontario's Auditor General on the province's air ambulance service, Ornge, found a web of questionable financial deals where tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted and public safety compromised;

"Whereas Ornge officials created a 'mini-conglomerate' of more than a dozen private entities that enriched former senior officers and left taxpayers on the hook for \$300 million in debt;

"Whereas government funding for Ornge climbed 20% to \$700 million, while the number of patients airlifted actually declined by 6%;

"Whereas Ornge was paid \$7,700 per patient transported by land ambulance despite subcontracting this service for \$1,700 per patient, a full \$6,000 per patient less;

"Whereas, after receiving questions of serious concerns at Ornge from the opposition in 2010 and early



2011, the Minister of Health did not provide adequate oversight, ignored the red flags and reassured the Legislature that all was well; and

"Whereas, on March 21, 2012, the Legislature voted to create a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals surrounding Ornge;...

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government of Ontario immediately appoint a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals surrounding Ornge."

I support—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further petitions. The member from Huron—Bruce.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With that said, I find it a pleasure to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, from the people of Ontario with respect to the decision to close Blyth Public School by the Avon Maitland District School Board.

"Whereas the pupil accommodation review states that an ARC committee is required, among other things, to determine the value of a school to the local economy, yet in the case of the Blyth Public School, there is in the minutes of the ARC committee not a single reference to any discussion of the effects of school closure on the local economy; and

"Whereas the same guideline states that the ARC, which is appointed by the board, must include membership drawn from the school community and the broader community, including, among others, business and municipal leaders, yet the ARC meetings considering the Blyth Public School included no Blyth business or municipal leaders; and

"Whereas the only invitations to public meetings in Blyth regarding the accommodation review were taken home by students to their parents, with the result that the broader community were not represented in the discussions; and

"Whereas many other communities across Ontario are now encountering very similar behaviours by their school boards; and

"Whereas single-school communities across Ontario are being permanently damaged economically and socially by the closure of their only school, which is, according to Premier McGuinty, the heart and soul of these communities; and

"Whereas the current Education Act of Ontario very undemocratically provides school boards with the absolute power to close any school they choose, with no avenue of appeal available to anyone, not even members of their own communities;

"Therefore, we, the residents of Ontario who have signed our names below, do hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to adopt and enact the following measures:

"(1) An immediate moratorium on all disputed school closures resulting from the accommodation review process and continuing until June 30, 2015; and

"(2) The immediate striking of a truly independent third party body with the authority to review and reverse all disputed school closures found to be detrimental to the community or in conflict with other provincial programs or regulations; and

"(3) Revision of the Education Act to require school boards to work with their municipalities and communities to ensure school closures comply with the principles and practices of sound community and educational planning."

I do agree with this petition, and I'm pleased to affix my signature.

### SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act protects tenants in dwellings, long-term-care homes and retirement homes from sudden and unfair increases to their rent; and

"Whereas additional costs such as the provision of meals and other services are not subject to the said act; and

"Whereas there have been episodes of repeated, large and unjustified increases to the stated costs of meal provisioning in Cornwall and area; and

"Whereas residents do not have a say in the procurement and administration of meals and other services provided by the facility, nor can they opt out of such services when notified of an increase in charges, being thus committed to a "take it or leave it" choice;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

(1) To instruct the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to enact regulations ensuring fairness, protection and choice for residents of retirement homes and long-term-care facilities that provide any other necessary services such as, but not limited to, meals and personal assistance at an extra cost to their residents;

(2) To instruct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to undertake a comprehensive review of the administration of retirement homes and long-term-care facilities with respect to the provision of services other than lodging that involve an extra charge to residents."

I support the petition. I will be signing it and giving it to page Victoria.

1350

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Davenport on a point of order.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome grade 10 students from Bloor Collegiate in the great riding of Davenport. Welcome to the Legislature. Thanks for coming.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As the member knows, that's not a point of order, but we absolutely welcome all visitors to the House.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### 2012 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 28, 2012, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate? The leader of the third party.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thanks very much, Speaker. Throughout our province's history, Ontario has succeeded when everyone had a stake in prosperity. I often talk about my own father, who arrived in this country without very much. Just by walking into a plant at that time, he was able to land a job that he held for the rest of his life, the kind of job that could raise a whole family on a single salary, a job that meant someone like me, the daughter of an auto worker, could pay for a university education by waiting on tables, which is what I did.

I think everyone here understands that change is definitely a fact of life, and we have to choose how we're going to embrace that change. How do we face the challenges of today? Do we choose a path that leaves people falling further and further behind, or do we focus on the people who make our province work?

Speaker, I've been very clear. When Ontario families are doing well, Ontario will do well, and we need a plan that focuses our efforts on their well-being: making life affordable, creating and protecting good jobs, and ensuring that health care and other services are there for them when they need them.

I was elected—I think we were all elected, frankly—with a mandate to work together to get results for people, to help them through the tough times we're dealing with. That's what voters wanted when they elected a minority government in October.

Now, families are confronted with a budget that leaves them falling further behind, and I, along with this amazing team of New Democrats that I have the very large honour to sit with, have to make a decision. For us, the first step was really quite easy. We decided to talk to people to see what they thought.

That was something that was missing throughout the lead-up to the budget. For the first time in decades, this Legislature didn't have pre-budget hearings. Instead, people were effectively told to submit their views to Don Drummond, a former bank executive who helped write previous Liberal budgets and Liberal platforms.

Now, it's no surprise that people very much feel they have not been heard. That's a message that has come through loud and clear as we've been talking to people. We asked the people of Ontario to tell us what they thought, and they responded. Over 5,000 people con-

tacted us through email. Over 5,000 more have called on our telephone line.

It's no surprise that their views vary quite widely. A lot of people don't want an election, but many, many people think it's worth having one over this budget. Some people are worried about the lack of a plan on jobs. In fact, many people are worried about the lack of a plan on jobs. Some are worried about the impact of cuts on health care. Some feel that they're being asked to take another hit to the family budget while those who can most afford to pay keep getting the breaks. But two things—two things—are very, very consistent: No one thinks this budget is perfect, and they are very, very thankful to be heard.

Now, a lot of what we're hearing is familiar, because it's exactly what we heard before the budget. Ontario's deficit is a significant challenge, but it's one that will not be solved by dramatic cuts that transfer the burden onto household budgets that are already feeling the strain. Ontario's households, Speaker, are dealing with unprecedented levels of debt.

Wages are falling. Unemployment remains stubbornly high. You know, economists tell us that the crisis in Ontario's economy isn't in the corporate sector. Thanks to years of corporate tax reductions, Ontario's corporations have unprecedented levels of cash in reserve. It's households that are falling behind.

Now, unfortunately, the government has pursued a policy of increasing the burden on households to provide more no-strings-attached corporate tax giveaways. I think it's pretty obvious to everyone, this simply is not working.

Although the Ontario economy has followed other jurisdictions in North America in adding employment since the recession, the recovery has been very, very slow and Ontario continues to fall behind. Our unemployment rate is above the national average. The average paycheque in this province is actually shrinking, and we're the only province in Canada where this is happening. It's no surprise then, Speaker, that Ontarians remain concerned about job security and about their financial future.

A recent poll showed that Ontarians are now among the least optimistic about the Canadian economy, with only about one third believing that the economy is going to improve over the next year. The same survey shows that people in this province are also most concerned about job loss, with more than one quarter worried that someone in their household is going to lose a job.

But you don't need to look at polling to know that, Speaker. Anybody who's been to Windsor, anybody who's been to Hamilton, anybody who's been to community after community across the north already knows that things are very, very tough, that people are having a very tough time. We're hearing from people who tell us the same stories, and I'm going to quote from some of those people. One person said, "It's already an everyday struggle now with this budget ... will I eat ... will I have a doctor ... will I be able to afford my bills?" Another person wrote, "Northern jobs are always hit hard. When



mills or mining closes nobody worries" anymore "because there is nothing left." Another one says this budget "is going to drive already struggling families deeper into poverty and affect others in their standard of living."

If Ontario is going to succeed, the people who make it work cannot continue to be falling behind. As economist Toby Sanger told the Standing Committee on Finance last year—of course, he couldn't have told them this year because there were no hearings by the committee this year. But last year, Toby Sanger noted, and I'm going to quote, "There's a lot of focus on public deficits, but it's also important to look at the deficits of the household sector and the balances of the corporate sector.... As we all know now, the debt of Canadian households has steadily increased and is now at a record rate of personal disposable income. By some measures, these are higher than rates in the United States."

He goes on to say, "Meanwhile, corporate debt ratios have kept on falling, even right through the recession. So once again, the corporate sector has great balance sheets and often lots of excess cash, but they aren't investing in the economy."

Now, these concerns have also been raised by other economists. Dan Ciuriak and John M. Curtis state this, and I'm quoting: "Households are carrying high debt burdens ... due to high unemployment. The prescription is to cut transfers.... In other words, the prescription for inadequate demand is to cut support for household incomes, thereby reducing demand further." It makes no sense at all.

Unfortunately, with sales tax harmonization, rising prices for electricity and an agenda of cutbacks, that's exactly what we've been doing, and it's exactly the wrong thing to do.

What we need, Speaker, is a real plan, a real plan to create jobs and to protect jobs, and we need to have a consistent message. A message that we've been hearing from the people of the province is that this current plan hasn't been working. We've been telling them we think the focus needs to be on jobs. They've been telling us they agree. The government keeps failing miserably on that front, and this budget plan falls short on the job creation side. There's just no other way to describe it.

1400

There's a proposed jobs and prosperity fund that's talked about in the budget. It sounds good. I'm quite concerned, though, that the only jobs that are going to be created by the jobs and prosperity fund are the advertising jobs for the firm that's going to be promoting the fund. We've seen too much of that kind of thing in this province already.

If we continue to hand out money with no strings attached, without clear criteria that link the cash received to creating and protecting jobs, then we can't be surprised, Speaker, if we get exactly the same results that we've already been getting from this government.

So what do we do? Well, we've put forward some pretty simple measures. A first step would be to actually reward those people, those companies that are creating

the jobs. Targeted refundable tax credits, that reward companies when they hire new workers, train them or make job-creating investments in Ontario—that's when we should be rewarding people.

That's the kind of thing we need to do in Ontario. If we do that, if we reward those investments for job creation, if we reward those investments for training, if we reward those investments in plants, in machinery, in equipment, in technology, that will ensure that the public dollars that we're investing are actually creating good jobs for the people of this province. It's not rocket science. It's something that occurs in other jurisdictions and actually works quite well.

Ontario also needs to spend some time creating value-added jobs in our resource sector. This is an utter failure that's been happening for far too many years in the province of Ontario, and we've put forward some solutions to that. We can do that. We can actually create value-added jobs from our resource sector with amendments to the Mining Act, to ensure that Ontario's natural resources are not exported if they can be processed here in Ontario.

We also need to make sure the community has more control over the forest tenure process. That way, the stuff we pull out of the ground, the trees that we chop down in a sustainable way in our north actually put northerners and others back to work, instead of doing what I've done all too many times in visiting some of my friends from the north, whether it's Timmins—James Bay, whether it's Timiskaming—Cochrane, whether it's Algoma—Manitoulin—watching tractor-trailer after tractor-trailer after tractor-trailer full of minerals, ore, raw logs being shipped across borders or shipped somewhere else for processing to be done, meaning the jobs that go with that processing are going somewhere else than in Ontario. That's just not right. It shouldn't be happening here in Ontario.

What do we see? When we hear about plans to ship raw chromite out of the province or see communities like Dubreuilville decimated by job losses, we know that things have to change, and we know that they can change.

Continued investment in infrastructure is essential to get maximum bang for our buck in terms of creating jobs and stimulating the economy, and the government is taking a huge risk by slowing infrastructure spending while we're still trying to climb out of a recession.

It's just a mistake—I don't know how else to say it. It's a mistake, plain and simple. I raised it in question period this morning. I'm raising it again this afternoon. It is a plain and simple mistake to privatize Ontario Northland.

Every single dollar spent on infrastructure increases real gross domestic product by as much as \$1.20 in an economy performing below potential.

I've outlined a couple of simple steps. It's not rocket science. It's simple steps that we can be taking to get people working, steps the government could have taken in this budget, steps the government didn't take in this budget. The government completely missed the mark in

this budget. The mark is jobs, and that's not a mark we're creating. That's a mark you can see in the unemployment numbers. It's a mark you can see in community after community that's devastated. It's a mark you can see in the unemployment rates of our youth, Speaker. It's a mark you can see in the underemployment levels of so many people who lost decent jobs through the recession and haven't been able to get them back. That's the mark this government missed. It's a huge mark, and I don't know how they could have missed it. But New Democrats have some ideas for them as to how we can get back on track and actually hit that mark.

Speaker, we also need to make life more affordable for people. We need to help household budgets. We need to help those budgets in the process of dealing with our budget as a province. Life has to become more affordable for everyday folks. People are falling behind. They're falling behind like they have never fallen behind before, and the government's response over the last couple of years has been to simply shift more costs onto them and off the corporate sector. That was the rationale behind the HST: 600,000 jobs were promised; instead, we have 600,000 people looking for work.

People have been writing to us with their concerns about these issues, and I'm going to make a couple of more quotes from some of the responses we got. Somebody wrote, "There is nothing in the budget to help seniors with the cost of home energy. New Brunswick got it right by not charging HST." Someone else said, "Where are the jobs the HST was supposed to create?"

This Legislature has already passed second reading of a bill sponsored by the new MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin, and we all know what that bill does. That bill would exempt home heating from the harmonized sales tax. It will be a simple step that would give people a small break, and it's long overdue.

Even more overdue, Speaker, is a review of our electricity sector altogether. We were pleased to see a promise of a full-scale review of the electricity sector in the budget speech. But a review needs to look at real change in a sector that has become an alphabet soup of agencies and a toxic mix of private power deals.

Again, these words are from letters we received, Speaker: "My electricity costs have been rising faster than any other of my expenses and faster than the inflation rate. I strongly agree with the NDP proposal to amalgamate the four electricity agencies (Hydro One, OPG, OPA and IESO) into one company to remove duplication and create efficiencies in the common elements and thereby reduce electricity costs."

If people who are writing to us realize that the electricity system is a mess—that there are far too many agencies involved, that there's far too much duplication, that that duplication is costing us a fortune—why is it that the government has not been able to notice that? It has been an ongoing problem. We've raised it time and time again in this House. They need to start addressing it, because as they don't address it—as they continue to not address it—people's rates continue to go through the roof and they simply cannot afford their hydro bills anymore.

Speaker, we also need to be able to ensure that we have reliable and affordable public services. We're pleased to hear the government say that they want to protect our health care and education, but it's going to remain to be seen whether this will amount to anything at all, other than platitudes, when they look at their budget. They talk a nice talk when it comes to protecting health care and education, but we'll see, and Ontarians will see, if we get to a point where this actual budget they have put forward is implemented. We don't know whether that's going to happen, but if it does, it remains to be seen whether or not education and health care actually will be protected.

I think it's really clear that change in our health care system is going to require more immediate investment in things like long-term care and home care. I mean, it's obvious. Demographically, it's obvious. It's something this government should have realized probably eight years, nine years ago, when they first came to power in Ontario. An immediate first step we proposed, Speaker, was enhancing home care hours to eliminate the long list of people who are waiting for services—thousands and thousands of people waiting for home care services. We think a good place to start fixing our health care system is with that sector, Speaker.

1410

But it's clear that we need to do better. We've received a lot of comments from people who work on the front lines of our health care system. Michael from Toronto wrote this, Speaker, and I quote: "The hospital sector, where I work, is going to face bigger challenges with an aging population and we have to have the flexibility to pay for increasing demand of complex care over the next 10 to 20 years." John from Battersea says, and I quote, "Private home care company executive salaries have been added to the home care delivery chain, while still maintaining case managers at the community care access centres. Why do we need to pay those home care owners and company executives with health care dollars? We have an aging population and now is time to get this delivery mechanism right." New Democrats agree, Speaker.

One other concern that came through loud and clear in the last couple of days is one that's outlined in a quote that I'm going to read from a letter that was sent in by Vitali in Toronto: "It is a disgrace that we paid millions to hydro execs, hospital CEOs etc. ... when in reality their pay affects little to the service they are able to provide.... It is a complete lie to say that to attract the best you must pay insane amounts; these executives aren't running a true business.... [T]hey are running a public organization, which is supposed to be for public good, not to suck money that can go to hire more nurses and teachers!"

Vitali's pretty frustrated, Speaker. I think most Ontarians are frustrated. We watched yet another sunshine list, notwithstanding the platitudes from the last budget that this government was going to get control over CEO compensation, and we actually watched some CEOs have a half-million-dollar increase in their salaries. That



wasn't their base salary, Speaker; that was the increase that they got over last year's sunshine list exposure to this sunshine list disclosure. It's ridiculous. It's unbelievable. The people of this province are sick and tired of seeing their hard-earned health dollars go to these top executives and this government refusing to rein in the salaries, the perks, the benefits that are far out of whack from what everybody else is able to achieve in this province.

Speaker, that brings me to a final and important point. Everyone agrees—I don't think anybody disagrees—that we need to balance the books, but for far too many Ontarians, the budget itself does not take a balanced approach, and CEOs are just one example. While the government is quick to declare a freeze, it's clear that some people are more frozen than others yet again. Colin from Peterborough says that "overpaid hospital CEOs will remain untouchable." Frances from the Sarnia region told us, "I worked in hospital administration for 20 years and have observed the waste and the revolving door of executives hired and cut loose with outrageous severance packages only to appear weeks later at another hospital."

The government's current salary "freeze" has left CEO pay climbing by as much as \$500,000 a year, as I've already said. It is clear that it's not working, and in their budget document yet again they pay lip service to anything that really is a hard cap on CEO salaries. So their current scheme in terms of CEOs isn't working, and neither is the government's plan, or their previous plan, to legislate a wage freeze. You know, they've put this in the budget again, or at least they've put it in the speech. They've put in the speech that they're going to legislate a wage freeze. They talk about how they are going to respectfully negotiate, but then they say, of course, "We're going to respectfully negotiate all the while we have a gun to your head, because if you don't behave at the negotiating table, we're going to legislate the terms of a collective agreement anyway." So it's really not true that they are negotiating in good faith as per the process that negotiations should be undertaken in this province.

As the Minister of Finance and the Premier have noted, the Supreme Court has been very clear on this issue. Legislated wage freezes don't pass the smell test of our Canadian charter. It's quite plain and simple. And that's not me saying it. The Premier has said it. The finance minister has said it. I guess they forgot about that.

Don Drummond, their own expert, noted that it won't contain costs in the long run. In his report, he sets out very clearly that all that is achieved is catch-up in future contracts. That's an ineffective policy direction—ineffective. Now, Don Drummond and I disagree on a lot of things. On that one, we happen to agree, because we've seen it in the past. It's not something like we're making it up, it's not like we think it's not going to be effective. The evidence is clear. It's ineffective.

Speaker, among the letters that we've received is one from Smokey Thomas, the president of OPSEU. Smokey is with us in the gallery and I wanted to say hello and thank him for being here.

Smokey wrote this in a letter that he sent to me recently: "In my discussions with other labour leaders, there is profound recognition that now is not the time for hyperbole or provocation.... We are actively promoting a forum wherein business, labour, community and government work together to find immediate, balanced and reasonable solutions to Ontario's economic challenges."

I couldn't agree with him more, Speaker. We need to look at responsible, practical and fair ways to balance the books and the priorities of families.

You know, during the last election campaign, New Democrats proposed restoring a corporate tax rate to 14%, as it's been taken down from that level over the last couple of years. It now sits at 11.5%. We said to take that rate from 11% and take it back up to 14% and start making temporary input tax credit restrictions permanent. So what does all that mean? What's a temporary input tax credit restriction?

Right now, companies can't write off everything in terms of all of their entertainment and all of their sky-boxes, for example, if you go to the Rogers Centre or SkyDome. Companies aren't able to write those input tax credits off. But this government's plan is that, in a couple of years, they're going to be able to start writing that stuff off. So on top of the HST and on top of reduced corporate taxes, now they're going to get yet another bonus. It's going to cost the treasury billions of dollars in a couple of years when that's implemented.

Why do they need another break, Speaker? Why do they need another break? But the finance minister's plan, the Premier's plan, the Liberal plan is to give them more breaks. It is simply unfair and it's unbalanced. It's clear that we need to look at government revenue as well as government spending.

The government has proposed freezing the corporate tax rate instead of proceeding with cuts. Okay; that's a good step. But people we've heard from believe that we can, and have to, go further. Another quote: "I do not like the budget because it targets the poor and disenfranchised. Children need to be protected; health care needs to be enhanced. Let those who have the ability to pay taxes pay more."

Another quote: "If the Ontario government is going after the average guy, while executives with premium pay packages to begin with are off scot-free, this is not fair. Austerity should be shared by all."

Speaker, throughout our province's history, Ontario has succeeded when everyone has a stake in prosperity. When Ontario families are doing well, Ontario itself as a province will do well. This budget needs to keep them in mind. As it's currently written, this budget falls very, very short.

We are going to continue to listen to people, and we are going to put forward some ideas for positive change. And we hope—we very much hope, Speaker—that the government will work with us in the spirit of a minority government, in the spirit of the government that the people of this province chose back in October, to avoid an election and to deliver a budget that works for the people who make our province work.

1420

That's the commitment of New Democrats. That's the work that we've been doing and that we're going to continue to do. I hope that at the end of the day we will end up with a budget that works for the people who make this province work. Otherwise, we all know where we're headed.

Speaker, thank you very much. I move the adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Ms. Horwath has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

# RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENT INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2012

## LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION DES LOYERS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 28, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / *Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate? The member from Welland.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to stand here today as the housing critic for the New Democratic caucus to speak on Bill 19, intended to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, which the government claims is an aim to make rent more affordable and predictable. The government proposes a rent increase cap for private landlords for the very profitable rental housing industry at 1% to 2.5%.

When I say "very profitable," the private rental housing industry is one of the only industries that have consistently proven to make money due to the rising property values. Bill 19 will do almost nothing to address Ontario's crisis in affordable housing or provide Ontario's tenants rights to livable, well-repaired and safe units.

Further, Bill 19 will do nothing to deal with the over 50,000 to 60,000 units that are exempted from rent control provisions. This failed experiment to exempt certain units from rent control was supposed to foster a development climate back in 1991-92 to produce more affordable units, but it just didn't happen. And Bill 19 is not retroactive. It does nothing to protect those tenants who have already undergone this year's rental increase in accordance with the guideline. Tenant advocates call it a timid response to the ever rising cost of rents.

Now, the minister stated in her lead last week that this was a balanced approach, that landlords had already

planned for an increase and that it wouldn't be fair for landlords to have a change this late in the game. But what about the people who are on ODSP and those people who are on Ontario Works, having a monthly income of somewhere between \$500 for people on Ontario Works—\$594, I believe—and, on ODSP, \$800 or \$900 a month? What about the balance for them? They thought they might receive a little increase in their OW or their ODSP rates this year, but unfortunately, as the government has proposed in their budget, it doesn't look like that's going to be likely. It looks that, as part of the government's poverty strategy, they're not keeping that promise either. The working poor thought they might get a little increase in the minimum wage that might help them with their rent this year. Single-parent families thought they might receive a little bit of an increase in their \$200-a-year child tax benefit, but that isn't going to happen either. That promise has now been reduced to \$100. Shouldn't there be some balance and fairness for those people like there are for landlords in this province?

I was trained and worked for many years as a registered nurse, and nursing requires many technical skills. But people who choose nursing do so because they want to help others, because they care about others, because they have empathy for others. That is a central role to a nurse and it's a quality that I've used many times in my roles as the mayor of my city, as a city councillor in Welland, as a regional councillor in the area of Niagara. Whether it was in any of those roles or whether it was in my time as a nurse, I've always used listening and empathy as the benchmark when confronted with any issue.

Ontario's renters are the most vulnerable in our province. In no particular order, they are children, they are seniors living in poverty, they're the working poor, they are those on social assistance and on ODSP, and they're the disabled, the immigrants and the people of colour.

I also wonder if the government has turned their mind to what "affordable" means to the most vulnerable in this province. As I stand before you today, I want to quote—this issue was actually before the last Legislature—probably in April or May of last year. My colleague from Parkdale-High Park presented, during the Bill 140 debate, that Bill 19 clearly lacks empathy and any commitment to address housing as a human right. She talked about the grim statistics around Bill 140 in Ontario regarding affordable housing. At that time, 1.3 million Ontarians were paying more than 30% of their income on rental housing; 120,000 families lived in overcrowded situations; 80,000 Ontarians lived in substandard housing; and at that time, 142,000 were on affordable housing wait-lists, and that list in just one year has grown to 152,000 households on the list and growing.

On average, depending on where you live, whether you're a single male, senior or family, the wait-list can be 10 years or longer for affordable housing. Almost one third of Ontario's population lives in rental housing, and people die waiting to get into affordable housing. I've experienced this in my own family and in my own riding.



The insecurity today is compounding the lack of affordable housing because of rising utility costs. You heard our leader speak about the increasing hydro costs that are putting the squeeze on families today. Gas bills and hydro costs are expected to rise another 50%—the HST on home essentials, with this government refusing to give any type of relief to tenants.

The government could bring forward, after committee, the member from Algoma-Manitoulin's Bill 4, which passed second reading, a bill that provided some relief of HST on certain home heating costs. This would provide some relief to Ontarians experiencing high rents and low incomes.

The income level of Ontarians is stagnating and declining. I quote Kenn Hale, director of advocacy legal services at the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario: "During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to keep the rent increase guideline 'in line with what is happening in the real world' for tenants." He goes on to say, "In the real world, tenants are losing their jobs, facing demands for wage freezes and rollbacks" or living with a zero increase on social assistance. In the real world, the average rent is over \$1,100 for a two-bedroom apartment, and there's no limit on what a landlord can charge an incoming tenant.

Some people who live in our communities aren't aware of that. They think that if the unit is rent-controlled, it's rent-controlled, but in fact the control is with the tenant. Once the tenant leaves, the rent control is gone. All tenants deserve to be protected, including the 300,000 tenant households that live in units exempt from rent regulation. We hope that the minister amends the bill to provide this protection to the units as opposed to the tenant.

I met with a young man employed by one of the stakeholder groups recently who lives in a unit that is exempt from rent control. He told me his landlord wanted to increase his rent this year by 12%. Fortunately, he had the knowledge and the ability to negotiate with the landlord and he was able to reduce that to 6%, but that is still a \$720-a-year increase on a \$1,000-a-month-rent apartment.

The middle class is shrinking. Half of all tenants spend more than 50% of their income on rent, and there are tenants who are making choices between buying groceries, sending their kids to a sporting event or on a class trip, or paying for medication. Good housing is as basic to individual and population health, as bad housing policy leads to a heavy burden for poor health, premature death and increased policing costs, prison costs, health care costs and social services costs.

1430

Dr. Gary Bloch is a family physician and University of Toronto professor who founded Health Providers Against Poverty. He had an article in the local paper on March 28 where he made the link between poverty to the much-needed social supports for those on low income and the enormous damage to his patients' health. He's quoted as saying, "I worry this will result in our society being less

healthy, which should be the number one goal of the government."

The NDP caucus in the last session of Parliament introduced a number of key bills and motions, including a motion to say that housing was a human right. That motion was rejected by both the government and the official opposition party at the time. Speaker, I ask you: What kind of government fails to recognize adequate and affordable housing as a right? The United Nations recognized housing as a fundamental right. Do we stand with the United Nations or not?

Housing is a human right on an international scale, and the international community has long recognized that it is a fundamental and universal human right that must be protected by law. Since proclaiming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, more than 60 years ago, they have recognized this by producing many documents; for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention of the Rights of the Child. Canada has ratified all these treaties, and yet we couldn't get a motion passed in this chamber to recognize housing as a human right.

Speaker, Ontario is one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the world, and yet many Ontarians do not have access to adequate and affordable housing. Access to appropriate housing is inequitable, as I said before, for many groups who are identified by prohibited grounds of discrimination including race, disability and family status. International human rights groups have severely criticized Canada's housing situation numerous times. In 2007, Miloon Kothari, the former United Nations special rapporteur on adequate housing, described Canada's housing situation as very stark, very disturbing and amounting to a national crisis—and things have not improved since then.

In the wake of this week's budget, the government needs to negotiate with the federal government for a long-term affordable housing strategy with the funding attached, and the province needs to ensure that municipalities have access to a wide range of funding programs and policies to properly maintain the existing housing structure. The government needs to invest adequate funding to build new homes, repair rundown housing and support housing-related programs.

In addition, there are no-cost steps that the government could take to improve affordable housing. The government could amend the Planning Act to allow municipalities, on a voluntary basis, to develop mandatory inclusionary housing plans similar to initiatives in a number of US cities, where a fixed percentage of affordable homes is required in every new development. Each municipality would be responsible for setting its own inclusionary housing rules, but the province needs to give municipalities the legal right to create inclusionary housing plans through an amendment to the Planning Act.

Even Don Drummond, in his report to the Liberal government, suggested that the Planning Act be amended to include inclusionary zoning.

Access to safe and affordable housing is a human right, a basic need and a vital determinant of individual, family and community health, and it is critical to Toronto's ability and this province's ability to attract and sustain workers as a major driver of Ontario's economy. It plays an important role in ensuring a greener, livable city and promoting vibrant communities.

Across Ontario, Speaker, more than 627,000 households are in core need of housing—lack suitable, adequate or affordable housing without income to access it. This crisis is particularly felt in large cities like Toronto, where a large number of the residents in the city are renters. As I said earlier, it is the communities and groups disproportionately affected—who are lone-parent families, racial minorities, people with disabilities.

Beyond planning, municipalities have limited tools for actually building affordable housing. They often lack the federal and provincial funding that is required to make much-needed expansions. Municipalities do their best to provide some housing in their communities. In my community, for example, we've partnered many times with Habitat for Humanity. I know that in the city of Toronto there have been some Habitat for Humanity projects, but this doesn't go anywhere near the numbers of housing units that we actually need.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission knows that low social and economic status is a common factor in many types of housing discrimination. People identified by code grounds are disproportionately likely to have low incomes. The shelter allowance rates for families and people who receive social assistance are far below market levels. This, together with a limited supply, puts people at significant disadvantage when seeking shelter.

The Human Rights Code provides protection against discrimination in housing based on specific grounds, including the receipt of public assistance. The inclusion of receipt of public assistance allows individuals with a low social or economic status to file human rights claims when they have been subjected to differential treatment in housing.

However, many people with low social and economic status will not be in receipt of public assistance—people earning low wages, minimum wage jobs, homeless people living on the streets—but they still experience that differential treatment in housing. In many cases, there is a strong link between the social and economic status and membership in a code-protected group. These people will be identified by one or more code grounds and may experience discrimination—intersection of low social and economic status with other factors.

Speaker, I've had the opportunity over the last few months to actually meet with people in my community and with people here in Toronto. I've also met with some landlord advocacy groups. I've met with individual tenants who have shared many stories with me and even provided me with the addresses of what they call slum

landlords across my riding and in other areas of the province. They talk to me about the disrepair of the units that they live in. I want to share some of those with you today.

In Niagara alone, there are almost 13,000 people who are in receipt of Ontario disability support benefits. This equates to about 18,000 people when you factor in children and spouses. The ODS program is designed to be a long-term program. It isn't something that you're going to be on for three months or six months; it's pretty well expected that if you go on to ODSP and you have some form of permanent disability, you're going to be on it for a long time, if not the rest of your life.

Yesterday, the government introduced a budget that will freeze ODS benefits to current levels. ODS recipients were finally just climbing out of the black hole from the 22% cut in benefits from the Mike Harris regime back in the mid-1990s. I believe that just this year, they have surpassed those 1995 rates. So, 17 or 18 years later, they finally got back to where they were in 1995, only to be hit again with a freeze in those benefits.

Some will say, "They survived 17 or 18 years, so a freeze isn't a bad thing. They should be able to overcome that reduction." Well, I say that those people on ODSP, for all those years, just existed. They continued to need to use food banks on a regular basis. They had to shop at thrift stores and charitable stores.

**1440**

They had to eat a meal a day at their local shelter or at their church in my community. They don't even have enough money left at the end of the month to go to a movie. That's a sad, sad scenario for thousands of people living on ODSP in our province.

I have people in my riding who can't even afford to take a bus to a neighbouring community to visit their family, and I've been stopped on the street day after day and told these kinds of stories. These are the same people who are paying more than 50% of their income on rent.

There were more than a million visits to Toronto and area food banks in 2011. Then, after paying more than 50% on their rent, they're living in substandard accommodations. I had the opportunity to send out surveys in my riding and ask questions about the repair of rental units that constituents were forced to live in, and I got an earful from many. They completed the surveys, and the messages were consistent. They even provided me with the addresses of apartments in great disrepair in all five of the municipalities that are in my riding. They did this anonymously, however, because they fear retribution or eviction if they come forward and complain in public, because they've seen this happen to many of their neighbours and friends.

They complained about heat and cold issues, drafty doors and windows, which lead to higher heating and utility bills for them. They talked about mice and droppings in their units, raccoons and squirrels in their attics and walls, fleas and other insects—perhaps bedbugs, which is a huge problem in many areas of this province—that have never been dealt with by their land-



lord between tenants. They told me about leaking roofs and ceilings caving in, the work not being completed, even though the scaffolding was in place and had been erected for more than a year.

Many of them had mould issues in their units, no fire escape, problems with water temperatures or carpeting that had mildew and was never cleaned between tenants. Some did not even have a fire extinguisher or a smoke alarm, emergency or exit lighting, and were very concerned about their own and their family's and their children's medical and physical health and safety in some of these buildings.

Leaky pipes, sewage pipes leaking, low water pressure and clogged drains were regular occurrences on the surveys that I read; broken windows, lack of door locks and undersized electrical panels for the buildings that caused bulbs to burn out on a regular basis and the power to go out regularly. They addressed many other issues of the low aesthetic quality of their homes and yards, and while important in addressing their self-esteem, morale and quality of life issues, these were less significant than the major issues they were concerned about.

In some cases the tenants reported landlords had made physical threats against them if they complained. They talked about evictions. In fact, there are no codified protections to stop landlords' claims that they are moving in family members to units that they are actually evicting from.

Now, some did report that they did complain to their landlord or to the superintendent. They spoke to their landlord-tenant advisory staff. They sought legal counsel. They spoke to community workers and housing advocates, to city hall, to their MPP perhaps, or staff, but in these cases, even then the work did not get done, and so after many months or even years in some cases, they would have to move. They also talked about the length of time it takes to get through the process, the mediation, the tribunal and eventually the court system for enforcement of work orders; this, coupled by the costs of such appeals or charges.

I met a woman who consented to have her name in the public, Marilyn McHaffie from Welland. She provided me with letters to read to you about the life of a woman living in poverty and substandard housing. If I can take a moment, I'm going to read you parts of one of those. Marilyn McHaffie was actually from Guelph. She was well employed. She fell ill and she ended up in my riding for personal reasons. When she first arrived there, she went to a women's shelter. There was a space reserved there for her. Perhaps there wasn't a space for her in Guelph. She had been looking for rental space but she was unable to find a place. With the recent loss of her job, combined with having pets, that was a deterrent for landlords to rent to her. Eventually her sister, surfing the Internet, found her an apartment, and the ad said pets were welcome, so it looked like a good possibility for her. The ad also said that Ontario Works and ODSP recipients were welcome. "I knew that my recent unemployment would not be an issue" then.

"As I looked at the apartment, I realized it was really not suitable but had no choice.... I would try to make it into a nice home, regardless of the obstacles.

The landlord even asked her to put her social insurance number on the application. "I was concerned and said that I did not think" that it was right but he told me I would have to and "I really had no choice. At least I would not be living in a shelter or on the streets and could keep my pets."

She goes on to say, "The windows did not have any insulation" and were drafty. The heating system did not work. There was a little heat in the living room but none in the bedroom and it was too cold to sleep in the bedroom during most of the winter. The windows had no screens and so the bees often entered because there were no screens. Her "washroom and kitchen had leaks under the counter which had left black mould." Although there "were numerous checks done on the plumbing when the landlord received a high water bill," he really wasn't concerned about the plumbing pipes leaking under the sink because that wasn't creating a high water bill for him. So he had the water lines fixed, but he didn't take care of the other leaks.

"By the time I had left this apartment, the wall of the bedroom was covered in black mould. When I moved, I could not bring my bed or couch to my new home due to the mould....

"The shower had not worked since I moved in" and there was often no hot water....

"The fire inspector found numerous issues that needed to be resolved, including having a fireproof ceiling installed over the bar downstairs. Some of the issues were fixed, but there was still the risk of fire as the ceiling was never installed. Each unit was to have an extinguisher but I never had one....

"The knife I had barring my door"—because her locks didn't work—"clattered to the floor from the fight in the hallway" from the bar below. "I did not feel safe in my home."

She goes on to say, "As I looked at the parking tickets, I could not understand why I was being ticketed when I was in the parking space that was included in my rent." After "five tickets had been put on my van.... I asked my landlord why he told me parking was included." He said he forgot to tell her that she had to move her vehicle around. Street parking belongs to the city.

"I knew that there was no use in trying to have repairs done through the tribunal as other tenants had already tried. In their three appearances, the landlord was removed from the hearings each time for inappropriate behaviour and ordered to do repairs that were never done. It was not worth the fight....

"My mind recalls the substandard living conditions, squalor, intimidation and harassment brought about by this" landlord. "I recall the infants and children living in this filth. This building is not fit for habitation yet he continues to rent these apartments, taking advantage of people living in poverty. This was not a cheap apartment. The rent was \$595 for a very small one-bedroom apartment."

She goes on to say, Speaker, "People come and people go, but rarely does anyone stay for long. It is not a place that anyone could really call a home, despite the best efforts to make it such. I would never go back. It would be better to sleep on the streets."

"Marilyn McHaffie."

Speaker, that is what some—and I expect many—of our tenants are dealing with in rental housing across this province. I've also had emails from some of my Toronto colleagues from various apartment units that they live in.

This government in its budget is now proposing that the repair and the work enforcement for these repairs be downloaded to municipalities and that those bylaws in our communities can better address the complaints and enforce the work orders. Well, I can tell you, Speaker, that as the mayor of the city of Welland back 10 years ago and as a city councillor, my municipality, not unlike many of yours, works on a strictly complaint-based system of property standards and clean-yards bylaws, and that the number of staff assigned as enforcement officers is pretty slim, coupled with the fear of tenants' complaints and work orders that will never get done—they'll never get ordered, let alone get enforced.

**1450**

In addition to that, Speaker, the bill and the current legislation actually allows landlords, year after year, to be able to seek increases above the guidelines if there are some extenuating—extenuating, not kind of extreme situations such as a high tax increase or, I guess, higher than expected utility bills or some major repair problem in their building. But the same balance is not there for the tenant.

Our party actually thinks that landlords should be limited to only very extreme situations to be able to go back and ask for anything above what the highest increase could be.

We also think that there should be a loan fund established for landlords to take the burden off of landlords and tenants when these badly needed repairs need to be done.

Speaker, we need a bold, sustainable, long-term affordable housing strategy that responds to the housing needs and ensures the rights of renters in Ontario. The provincial government may be hesitant to make the full investment that is required to tackle Ontario's housing crisis head-on, but implementing half measures like this little bill, this very narrow rent control to deal with problems, will not bring about resolutions for struggling communities.

As I said, imagine if you were an Ontario Works recipient getting \$500, \$600 a month and trying to live in Toronto or anywhere in this province. We know what that life looks like. It looks like homelessness, it looks like food banks, and it certainly doesn't look like anybody who can afford anything in the way of housing.

The NDP in the 39th parliamentary session also introduced a bill on tenants' rights and landlord licensing. The bill would have applied to landlords with greater than six units, because we understand that small landlords have

their struggles. Landlord licensing just simply says that where the city work orders are held against a building—and I think there was an example given when Bill 140 was introduced, an eight-storey building where there was an elevator out of order for three months and there were seniors living on the eighth floor. Well, that landlord wouldn't be licensed again if he didn't comply with those work orders.

Landlord licensing is a simple idea, a self-funded idea that would allow the province to insist on compliance with work orders, something that is not currently happening in Ontario. Of course, it's not happening in wealthy areas or luxury apartments, but more importantly, this is what's happening in low-income tenanted areas, of which we have many in this province.

The long-term affordable housing strategy has to have strong, bold targets and sustainable funding. A long-term affordable housing strategy must ensure adequate supply of quality affordable units for Ontarians, supported by multi-year financial commitments.

I can tell you that in my time as the vice-chair of Niagara Regional Housing, that was always the biggest hurdle that we faced. Getting that funding one year at a time, it was so difficult to get any projects off the ground. It was difficult to provide subsidies for people any longer than beyond the year, and so it really provided no stability for tenants in their housing units.

If we wanted to compare ourselves to somebody who has done a great job in affordable housing, it is Sweden, which is a much smaller country than ours. Over a 10-year period, they actually produced 100,000 new units of affordable housing each year. They called it the million-home program, and they don't have an affordable housing crisis any longer. Many jurisdictions do much better than us, and in fact we have one of the worst records provincially and one of the worst records internationally.

We also need to provide funding so that at least 50% of these units can provide rent-g geared-to-income assistance.

An effective housing strategy also requires a solid foundation of accurate information about the scale of housing insecurity and homelessness in Ontario, and a clear way to measure progress. It must track the progress on whether actions taken under the strategy are systematically reducing the number of households on the wait-list, and we know that's not so because, in one year, the list went from 142,000 to 152,000. So we know the numbers are on the rise, and it's going up every year. The list is getting longer and tenants continue to pay more than 30%, more than 40% and, in many cases, more than 50% of their income on rental housing.

There was a time in the history of this province in Canada when young couples had a job, they got married—or they didn't get married—and they had a dream to own their own house like their parents. But here, there is a complete lack of affordability for young couples. I know here in Toronto housing prices are very high, but even in my riding, where housing prices were quite reasonable, new houses are now starting at



\$300,000 and \$400,000—pretty hard to buy on a \$10-an-hour job or an \$11-an-hour job. So the dream of home ownership will not come true for many Ontarians.

The greatest demand for affordable housing is often for those with disability, mental health and addiction issues. They are the hardest and the most expensive to house because they need supportive housing, and because there's virtually no supportive housing, most are at risk. Most of our homeless population at any given time fall into that category. They are homeless for a reason, and they die on our streets.

When I did my member's statement—I think it was my first member's statement here in the House—I actually talked about a supportive housing project in my riding that lost its funding last September. I spoke about one of the residents there. Her name was MaryJane Huneault. She was a tenant with long-standing mental health issues. This non-profit affordable housing building was built on the premise that it would always have supportive housing. After 20 years it lost all of its funding, \$150,000, because somebody—I don't know whether it was the province or whether it was the federal government—required an RFP after all those years and the funding went to some other agency.

Now, this woman actually had not had a hospital admission in 17 years because she was living in supportive housing. Before she actually went into that building, she cycled in and out of the hospital several times a year, but being in that kind of a background, she was able to have support in budgeting her money, paying her bills, and when she was having periods of anxiety, she had a support worker to talk to. So there is certainly more need to have supportive housing projects. We would save a lot of money on prison costs, on health care costs and on policing costs.

The government budget proposes a reduction this year, in 2012, in aboriginal affairs, and they propose to reduce the budget by almost \$3.4 million to communities that are the poorest in our country. I can't understand why they would be wanting to reduce that budget in light of northern members' statements on a regular basis about what's going on in our aboriginal communities.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Attawapiskat.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Attawapiskat. Yes, thank you.

Now the people who had a glimmer of hope that at age 65—so I'm somebody on ODSP and I'm getting \$850 a month or \$900 a month. I'm only 53 years old, and I was thinking, "Well, you know, when I hit 65, at least I'm going to get old age and guaranteed income supplements, and maybe I'm going to have \$1,400 a month; for the first time in my 40 years of adulthood I'm actually going to have a little bit more money that might make my life just a little bit more easy." But that glimmer, too, has been extinguished by the federal government, which now is going to make them wait till they're 67 to actually be able to collect any of that. I wonder what will happen to those people between age 65, when their CPP is ending or their ODSP is ending or whatever it is—what's going to happen to them in that two-year period? Are we going to have more homeless?

**1500**

When I was doing some work to prepare for today, I looked back on some of the government bloopers over the last couple of years and some of the things we've been talking about in the last few weeks, in particular, situations like Ornge.

I said, "Imagine if the \$50 million that was thrown at Ornge, in addition to their regular budget, over the last five years had been used for housing." Well, I'm not an accountant, but as I said, I have done some work with Niagara Regional Housing and have an idea of what a unit of affordable housing is expected to cost to build. That \$50 million that we kind of threw at Chris Mazza would have built 400 new units, or it would have provided rent stability subsidy for 40,000 people in Ontario for one year. The \$25 million that's still missing at Ornge that nobody seems to be able to find, even the 30 forensic auditors, actually would have built probably 200 new units or provided one year's subsidy for 20,000 people in need in this province.

Then there was the billion-dollar eHealth waste. Imagine the number of families and people that could have been supported by that billion dollars. That was a big number; I had to figure out how many zeroes there actually are in a billion dollars. But I think it's a thousand million, and I see a nodding head that I may be correct. That actually would have provided 7,000 units of affordable housing or supported 833,333 households for a year with a rent subsidy. I think it would have been a far better use of the money.

Back to the strategy, the long-term housing strategy needs to make housing truly affordable and accessible. The United Nations said it best. Why isn't the reality here? They suggest introducing a monthly universal housing benefit for low-income Ontarians, expanding the priority list for social housing, retrofits and funding for at least 2,000 new supportive housing units. But there is no commitment to new funding at this point.

Another target, of course, is to reform housing legislation to build stronger communities. Perhaps the reason this government hasn't been more forthcoming in building rental units—in fact, not at all: not one new rent-geared-to-income suite, no inclusionary zoning and nothing of concrete status in this new bill—is that they don't have any money. We have to admit that that's partly true. The government doesn't have any money. They're working in a deficit, \$16 billion or so, and a debt of more than all the other provinces combined. They've actually doubled our structural debt in seven years in office.

But here's the reality of the economy of housing: It literally costs more dollars and cents to keep someone underhoused or homeless than it does to provide housing for them. In fact, depending on which report you look at, it can range anywhere from \$55,000 to \$70,000 a year to keep people underhoused, because of the policing costs, the prison costs and the health care costs. The current action plan of this government, which is non-action, is costing more—not just in the long run, where it could be

argued it costs way more, because again, we're talking about poverty generation to generation and the cost of that, but it costs more in the short term.

In the city of Toronto and across this province, we have thousands of homeless on our streets, many of whom die during the winter. Thankfully, this year we've had a very mild winter, and I don't think too many deaths, but there have been winters I remember when every day we were finding a body in the street. Well, governments—this one included—have for a long time turned their backs on the housing file entirely, done very little. This government has talked the talk but not walked the walk. This bill is a gesture with a minimum rent control provision. A bolder move would have been to apply rent controls on units rather than rent controls between landlords and tenants, a small move but keeping that maximum number of units. It helps a little bit here and there; it's a feel-good measure. But there's not one new unit, not one new dollar and not one new rent supplement in this bill.

When you hear what housing activists—those who are in the field, those who do nothing but housing, those who look at housing issues every day of their lives—have to say when asked about the housing crisis, they say we need a strategy but we need the funding to go along with it.

Harvey Cooper, the manager of government relations for the Co-operative Housing Federation, who was here late last week, says, in reaction to the bill last year—I had a bit of a discussion with him about this year's bill—that it fails to recognize that construction of affordable housing actually has a major economic stimulative effect on the economy and can play a key role in recovery, while reducing poverty and providing a valuable public asset for the long term.

He goes on, "We agree with the province that the federal government has a responsibility to continue to support affordable housing.... But in presenting its vision for affordable housing, the Ontario government should look to lead, not follow. Its long-term plan should be grounded in a commitment to funding affordable housing as a core, continuing government program." It's never going away, folks. We're always going to need affordable housing in this province.

This government has responded to the economic bad times by giving incredible corporate welfare handouts to corporations who are storing the cash while ignoring the plight of hundreds of thousands of Ontario renters. The middle class is shrinking, and we know from past experience that putting people to work, infrastructure investment, new builds and new housing are policies that help. This government is not doing that.

One of the best-known housing experts in Ontario is David Hulchanski, a professor at the University of Toronto who has done a study on poverty by postal code. Here is what he says: "The provincial and municipal governments could implement specific policies to maintain and promote mixed neighbourhoods, inclusionary zoning whereby any medium-to-large residential developments

must include 15% to 20% rental and affordable units. They could also end vacancy decontrol—the right of landlords to charge whatever they wish when a unit becomes vacant—and thereby discourage the displacement of low-income residents. This is happening in many communities throughout the province.

"Bill 19 does not address the critical need for increased investment in new development and the ongoing maintenance of existing properties. However, the potential of any strategy cannot be fully realized until properly funded," and he goes on to say, "We would encourage the government to continue providing even limited funding in this current economic climate and to adopt some innovative financing solutions that the community-based housing sector proposed."

Under the eight years of the McGuinty Liberal government, the housing crisis has gotten worse: less housing, more families on the waiting list, longer waiting times, more precarious housing and more renters who cannot afford the basic necessities. That's what has happened here in our great province.

The Liberal government should have taken ownership of what our province looks like. After eight years, and now in a minority situation, what the Liberals have given us are longer lists, no new units and rental units in the profit sector in disrepair because of minimal to no enforcement of property standards.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the federal government needs to take ownership of the crisis as well, and we have long called for a national strategy. The Toronto Disaster Relief Committee has long asked for the 1% solution: 1% of the budget to go to housing. We're still asking for that federally, and we still need to get that federally.

There is so much that could happen in our province, but because of the narrow-sighted thinking of this government, they think—and I quote the member for Parkdale–High Park, who has been a real advocate in housing: "It's a kind of thinking that says, 'It costs money, it doesn't make money, to invest in affordable housing. It costs money, it doesn't make money, to help people rise above the poverty line. It costs money, it doesn't make money, to put infrastructure front and centre and new-build affordable housing front and centre.' That's the kind of short-sighted, conservative vision, quite frankly, that has caused this problem in the first place. 'Let's leave housing up to the private sector.' That has given us the Ontario that we live in now," and that is essentially the philosophy of the McGuinty government.

1510

So is it enough to help Ontario's most vulnerable? Absolutely not. And, again, who are Ontario's vulnerable? They are seniors living in poverty, they are children; they are single-parent families, the disabled, those living on social assistance, those underemployed, new Canadians, people of colour, low-income workers.

The Wellesley Institute's Michael Shapcott, in an article on March 20, 2012, says, "The recently released Drummond report on provincial spending urges increased



investment in new affordable homes and urgent attention to aging existing housing and calls on the federal and provincial governments to negotiate a new, long-term housing deal that would provide funding both for much-needed new affordable homes and also for repairs of existing, substandard housing.

"In completing work on Ontario's ... budget, the provincial financial minister"—this is Mr. Drummond to the provincial finance minister—should take up the "recommendations that the provincial and federal governments negotiate a long-term affordable housing plan with adequate funding; and that the province ensure that municipalities have access to a range of funding programs and policies to properly maintain housing infrastructure."

He goes on to say "doubling the allocation for affordable housing in the Infrastructure Ontario affordable housing loan fund to \$1 billion, to be financed by the sale of government bonds; ... reversing the cuts in both operating and capital dollars for affordable housing in the past year, and restoring the approximately \$600 million that is required to build new homes, repair run-down housing and support housing-related services." And "amend the Planning Act to allow municipalities to develop mandatory inclusionary housing plans, similar to initiatives in hundreds of US cities where a fixed percentage of affordable homes is required in every development. Each municipality ... responsible for setting its own inclusionary housing rules, but the province needs to give municipalities the legal right to create inclusionary housing plans through an amendment to the Planning Act."

So this is out of the Drummond report.

There is absolutely no commitment from this government to a sustainable, funded long-term housing strategy with any funding in this budget. So are we going to support Bill 19? Likely, we will be supporting this, but once again, it is a very small, narrow attempt for a much larger housing crisis in this province. The government has certainly failed to do the best job that they could do to ensure that all Ontarians have better access to affordable housing for Ontario tenants. I think, and I think that my colleagues in the NDP would agree, that it's shameful that there are so many people in our communities living in poverty.

I'll just spend the last few minutes talking about the limitations of the bill in general. The advocacy groups that I've met with over the last couple of months do not think that the guideline is the biggest program when it comes to affordability. According to the Federation of Metro Tenants' Association, if the bill had been in place for the last two years, it would have only reduced rents by \$3 a month. So if you were renting an apartment for \$1,000 a month and you had this little bill in place, you would have saved \$3 a month over the last two years.

There are bigger problems that need to be addressed. The vacancy decontrol, I think, is a very big problem, and we really need to focus attention on making sure that it is the units that are rent-controlled and not the tenants that are rent-controlled.

We also need to go back and look at the 50,000 or 60,000 units that were initially exempted from rent control back in the early 1990s. I think that number, in some of the data that I looked at, has actually grown to 300,000 units because of the rent-decontrol piece that needs to be addressed.

Rent regulation should apply to all private rental units, regardless of date of construction, and safeguards need to be in place to make sure that rental units are kept in a proper state of repair. Landlords should not be allowed to increase rents while there are outstanding work orders or needed repairs for units.

Mr. Speaker, even if people go to small claims court, if they go through the tribunal piece and they don't get their work done or if they go to their municipality where they have a bylaw and they have to go through the court system with the municipality, some of them are waiting 12 and 14 months to even get a date for court because of the backlogs in the court system.

Above-the-guideline rent increases should be capped or limited to exceptional circumstances. Guideline increases—this 1% to 2.5%—should be more than sufficient to fund basic repairs, and the landlord should not be able, year after year, to seek increases above those guidelines.

We think it's important to establish the loan funds to take the funding burden of repairs off the landlord and tenant. They would have this fund available to them that they could access, and hopefully that would make the repairs get completed in a more timely manner.

Closing the loopholes in rent control is an important issue, cracking down on the slum landlords. Too many landlords get away with delaying repairs, treating tenants unfairly and renting out units with bed bugs.

Under our platform, we would have cracked down on these practices by licensing the landlords with six units or more and taking away their licence if they did not keep their buildings in good repair. The Liberal government has failed in this area.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing: because of the tens of thousands of people who are now stuck in run-down and unaffordable apartments, and they're waiting for years—as many as 10 years or longer—for affordable housing units.

The Liberal government has not promised to build a single new affordable housing unit. In their eight-year-old platform, they promised to build 10,000 units per year, but they were only able to, I think, get to 40% of that promise.

Reduce the cost of heating and hydro: We've been talking about that. We heard our NDP leader speak about that today and about giving people just that little break of taking the HST off of home heating costs that would go a long way to helping people struggling as tenants in rental units in this province, but the Liberals seem to be content to let the cost of heating and hydro increase.

Once again, the United Nations has declared that all people have the right to decent, affordable housing, as has the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Canada has

ratified a treaty with the United Nations, and the NDP has fought, and will continue to fight, to ensure that the fundamental right to housing is recognized in Ontario law.

The Liberals voted down an amendment to their recent housing act, back with Bill 140, that would have recognized housing as a human right.

Speaker, those are my comments. I actually didn't think that I could get up here and speak for a whole hour on this issue, but I probably could have spoken on it for four hours, because there are so many issues and there are so many people struggling in our province. I thank you for the opportunity to talk about this important issue here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** My compliments to the member from Welland. Not only did she go for about an hour, but she has shown that she has a very in-depth knowledge of the issues, both the housing situation and on Bill 19, which is actually the bill that is for debate. I hope that some of the concerns the member has expressed indeed will be addressed as we move the bill along for reading and consultations and bring it back perhaps in an even better format.

1520

We believe we have a good piece of legislation. I have to compliment the minister for bringing it forth. But I have to say to the member for Welland—and I hope to address at length the legislation that is for debate today when I do my 20-minute presentation—on the housing situation itself, because the member has dwelled quite a bit on the housing situation, that, yes, she's quite correct when she says that it's a very, very important issue.

We cannot miss by recognizing and addressing the fact that the issue is so important and it's so big that no government alone can do justice to it. As we move along and try to keep up with construction of new units, we have to keep in mind as well that we have hundreds of thousands of units that need maintenance repairs on a continuous basis. Unless we have this long-term housing strategy, on which I had the pleasure of conducting most of the hearings throughout the province of Ontario, and unless we have the federal government on our side and continuing to support this long-term housing strategy, which is a vision shared by everyone, we cannot continue to afford to build enough housing or maintain the existing stock without affecting the very same stock.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I've listened intently to my colleague from Welland, and I look very intently to listening to the extended words from York West, particularly that long-term strategy, because my concern is that the last eight years' strategy leaves me fairly perplexed, of many things they've done. But we'll leave that till he brings his remarks and I'll comment then.

It's very apparent that the member from Welland brings a lot of compassion. She cares about the vulner-

able. She cares about poverty. It raises a good question: What about the poverty of the 60,000 jobs that they just hacked out of the horse racing industry? Many more of those people are going to probably need affordable housing because they're not going to have jobs.

She went on, and I kind of agree, to the extent that this bill, although it has some good intentions, will do little for the most vulnerable and for the residents of my community, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and the riding thereof. Even with all the legislation and so-called protections in place, some are facing a whopping \$100 increase to their monthly rent, a hike of some 20% due in part to the high energy prices, courtesy of the Liberal government's ill-conceived green energy programs, and, I should add, the 46% increase that's going to be added to each and every household in our province.

This bill will do nothing to fix the problem at Bruce county social housing. It won't help people like the McConnells and Betty Elizabeth Adams and Freda Speer, all of whom are struggling to know how they will cover this unexpected rent increase this year.

The colleague from Welland referenced a couple of different things. She blamed Mike Harris yet again, and I think we need to move that page on. But I'll counter that by saying she also said at the same time that we need bold vision. I would suggest that if Mr. Harris had not taken the bold steps he did—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bill Walker:** —we would already be over the cliff that the Liberals are heading us down with our deficit and the debt concern that we have, sir. If we don't lower our government spending significantly, and I'm talking very significantly, there will be less money for the less vulnerable, for those that are in poverty and those who do not have jobs and need more.

Currently, we're spending \$10 billion—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to my colleague from Welland as she spoke. I don't know that this is the first time she spoke for an hour, but I think it's the first time in any event that I saw her stand up and speak for an hour, and her speech was excellent. I mean, it covered literally every single point that could be made on housing and public housing in Ontario.

I do remember, going back to my own first year here in the Legislature, I was sent off to Quebec City to look at housing as it was unfolding. It was a Conservative government at that point. There was some federal initiative that was taking place in Quebec City, and I was there to hear. Of course, all of the other provinces and territories grabbed hold of the housing plan and ran with it, and Ontario, to its shame at that point and since then, did not.

So my friend from Welland has quite correctly pointed out that today you have housing in Ontario with many people living in substandard places, where there are cockroaches and mice and bed bugs and leaky roofs and the whole plethora of things that people are forced to live



in, and the state of disrepair is enormous. There isn't even enough money to, if you would, download to the province to allow them to have inspectors go out and make sure the housing is kept up to at least a minimum level of human habitation.

She also talked about landlord licensing. That is an idea whose time has come, because some of the slum landlords should not be in that business. Finally, she talked about inclusionary zoning. This would not cost the government a penny—not a penny. It would free up to municipalities that are of a mind to build appropriate housing the authority to do so. If ever there was an idea whose time has come, that one too should be on the agenda today.

My compliments to the member from Welland.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment, and I look to the member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not ask a question; I will just comment.

I want to congratulate the member from Welland for her very thorough canvass of Bill 19 and the situation facing many tenants in Ontario. The Liberal government has been very strong and vigilant on the issue regarding tenants. One need only to look, several years ago when the Mike Harris government was in place, at the size of the rent increases from 1995 on; I have the numbers here. Suffice to say that over the past five years, the annual rent increase—the average has been 1.7%, which I think is reasonable. If we cap it at zero, then landlords are not going to repair the units.

But I take the side of the tenants as well. I have very concentrated sections of my riding, in Scarborough Southwest, that have a lot of tenants. One need only visit Teasdale in my riding or, as the member from Beaches—East York has spoken, Thisletown—I think it's in his riding. It's a very, very concentrated area—

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Crescent Town.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Crescent Town—my apologies. I've visited both sites, and they're extremely concentrated and many of the units require repair. So one of the things we, the Liberal government, have done is put funding toward capital repairs. The only problem is that the level of repairs is increasing so rapidly and we're trying our best to keep up to it—we've allocated funds toward that and we will continue to do that to try to repair the units. I agree that the federal government has to come to the table as well on this issue. Housing, I believe, is also a federal issue. If all three levels of government, including municipal, work together, I think we can start working better on this issue. But this bill is a start.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'll now return to the member for Welland, who has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to all the members here today for their comments.

With respect to Mike Harris, I think I'll continue to blame Mike Harris as long as I'm here. You know, I kind

of lived and worked in the Mike Harris regime as it related to labour in those days. To pick on the most vulnerable in our society, those on ODSP, and cut them by 22%—I can remember the cans of tuna story; you know, they could get this basket of food and get 79-cent-a-can tuna, and they would be able to make up for the \$200 they were losing by just being very careful about their dietary budget.

But I also picked on our own government in 1991 when I talked about the exemption of the 50,000 or 60,000 units. At that time, the province was in a deep recession, and the NDP, who were the government at the time, thought that exempting those units after a certain date would actually cause some new development and some new units being developed. So I think I'm parceling out my complaints—

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Fairly.

1530

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Fairly, yes. I picked on the Liberals as well.

But, you know, the advocates have told me that rents here in the city of Toronto in the last few years have increased dramatically in units that are not rent controlled. For some that were \$800, people are living in a unit that is now exempt, and they're paying well over \$1,100. With the job situation and people being paid minimum wage and barely more than that, they can ill afford to have those types of rent increases.

I look forward to further debate on this issue as this moves on to committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate on Bill 19? I recognize the member for York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I would like to thank Minister Wynne, first of all, for introducing the bill itself and for her comments to the bill and as well to the people of Ontario. As the minister said earlier, this proposed legislation is just one more example of the work that this government is doing to help make housing more affordable for the people of Ontario. This is why we are taking action to stabilize the rent increase guideline.

As mentioned, the proposed amendment, if passed, would mean that the annual rent increase guideline would be capped at 2.5% and would not fall below 1% per year. This approach would provide stability and predictability for both renters and tenants. The reason why, Mr. Speaker: If we look at the history of the consumer price index over the last several years, from 1975 to 1986 it fluctuated between 4% and 8% per year; from 1987 to 1999, the guideline fluctuated from a bottom of 2.8% to 5.4% per year; and from 2000 to 2012, from a low of 0.7% to a high of 3.9%.

Stabilizing the rent increase guideline is just one more step in continuing the work government is doing to meet the variety of affordable housing needs that exist in this province. While the proposed amendment would help low-income renters, our government is also hard at work to address other issues to make housing more affordable in Ontario.

Speaker, affordable housing is a lot more than just bricks and mortar. I am sure that all of my colleagues here today would agree that access to affordable housing is crucial to breaking the cycle of poverty. Responsive community-based housing services are crucial for those caught in poverty or suffering from mental illness. Our government heard that message consistently in the consultation for the poverty reduction strategy and the long-term affordable housing strategy. As Minister Wynne has said many times in her meetings with stakeholders and her remarks to industry, safe, adequate and affordable housing is a key factor in determining health and in having a positive impact on the education of our children.

We know that someone's struggle with housing issues may reflect underlying problems that have not been addressed, such as mental illness, addiction or isolation. That is why we announced last June a comprehensive mental health and addiction strategy to better coordinate services across the province and respond to clients' needs. It is one of this government's priorities to help build a pathway out of poverty for those in need and work towards improving community support. Affordable housing is one of the stepping stones to building that pathway.

As you have already heard, the Housing Services Act, 2011, replaced the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000. The Housing Services Act, 2011, allows for more flexible decision-making at the local level, particularly regarding local housing and homelessness plans. There are new accountability requirements to help ensure that housing resources are used in the best way possible to deliver results for people.

We realize that if investments are going to be made, it is imperative that the funds are used appropriately. This means that local needs are assessed and programs are implemented to best meet the needs of a municipality or region. It also means that where the money goes and how it benefits Ontarians is done transparently.

As a first step to implementing our long-term affordable housing strategy, we are looking at consolidating some of our housing and homelessness programs. This approach would streamline the system and enable funding to be used in a much more flexible manner. It puts the decision-making in our municipal partners' hands and allows them to use the funds in ways that will best meet their specific regional needs.

This is an example of how our innovative people-first strategy would work. Housing programs would be flexible and tailored to different needs, and tax dollars would be used more efficiently.

The rent increase guideline amendment also helps to put people first by providing renters with increased financial stability from year to year and ensuring that Ontario families know what their monthly expenses are going to be.

The new federal-provincial Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario funding agreement that the minister signed with her federal counterpart on November 8,

2011, supports the goals set out in our long-term affordable housing strategy to address the diverse affordable housing needs in the province. It is an agreement that will have far-reaching benefits for many Ontarians, even if they personally do not need affordable housing.

We are committed to working to address a variety of housing needs in this province, from homeowners, renters, shelter victims of family violence, to affordable housing for low-income families.

As Minister Wynne said at the signing ceremony, "This agreement will create thousands of jobs for families across the province and will benefit all communities in need. When we get individuals and families into safe and affordable housing we are improving their health, making our neighbourhoods safer and increasing young Ontarians' opportunities to prosper."

The Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program is a four-year initiative and represents a combined investment of some \$481 million from the province of Ontario and the government of Canada. Funding will be provided through this new agreement to create and repair affordable housing and provide rental and down payment assistance to families to make housing more affordable. This funding agreement will also provide increased flexibility, with accountability, to service managers who are the local housing administrators, housing proponents and other housing partners to deliver affordable housing in their communities. This agreement will create over 5,000 new jobs and will build or repair approximately 7,000 affordable housing units over four years in Ontario. That's the size of Acton or the city of Hanover.

The Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program builds on our record of providing \$2.5 billion in affordable housing, more than any previous government. This allocation will build and repair more than 270,000 units and will provide some 35,000 rent supplements. To date, Ontario's housing investments since 2003 have created over 57,000 jobs across the province.

Under the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program, municipal partners will be allocated a notional amount of funds which may be used to address local housing priorities. Service managers, including district social service administration boards, are able to choose from a menu of program components that they can tailor to local priorities.

Funding may be used for the construction of new affordable rental units. It may be used for down payment assistance for low- to moderate-income households considering the purchase of a home.

Funding may also be used to provide subsidies to landlords to reduce the cost of rental units available to low-income tenants. This is called the rent supplement component.

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The housing allowance may be used to provide subsidies directly to low-income tenants in rental units. Additionally, it can be used as assistance for repairs and renovations, to maintain the affordability and improve



accessibility of individual dwelling units and multi-unit buildings. Specifically, under the northern repair component, assistance may be provided for repairs and renovations to individual homes and multi-unit buildings in northern Ontario.

Under the Ontario Renovates component, funds may be allocated for repairs and renovations to individual homes and multi-unit buildings across the province. As I have stated, this gives municipalities who deliver the services on the front line more flexibility to use existing resources to meet local housing needs.

Recognizing that the off-reserve aboriginal community is particularly disadvantaged in the housing market, and building on the success of the existing Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust program, the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program includes a component aimed directly at the off-reserve aboriginal community. This component will be delivered by aboriginal program administrators. In total, the ministry has allocated more than \$26 million for the provision of housing for off-reserve aboriginal families. Similar to the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Housing Trust program, we have allocated 25% of the funding for the greater Toronto area and 75% for the rest of the province.

This program is a great example of our long-term affordable housing strategy in action. A goal of our long-term affordable housing strategy is to make it easier for Ontario families to find and maintain affordable housing. It recognizes that funding needs to be flexible and that consideration must be given to the diversity of communities of all sizes, be they urban, rural, in the north or Far North, because different communities have different priorities and needs.

Unlike earlier housing programs, the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program provides increased flexibility with appropriate accountability for our municipal partners. In other words, the ministry does not prescribe how much funding must be dedicated to each program component. This is an important feature of this program. As you have already heard, our consultations on the long-term affordable housing strategy told us that the existing housing system was too complicated and created barriers for people in need. And the people who deliver housing programs told us they are unable to develop the best possible services because of dated provincial rules.

We are improving the affordable housing system from the ground up, building a strong foundation based on four key pillars: putting people first, creating strong partnerships, supporting affordable options and accountability. Last year, our Housing Services Act, 2011, was passed, the legislative framework of our long-term affordable housing strategy. This new legislation supports better decision-making at the local level, particularly through the requirement for local housing and homelessness plans.

The Housing Services Act, 2011, supports a community-centred approach where housing services are flexible, adapt to the different needs of local communities

and do a better job of helping people. The Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program builds on the success of the affordable housing program, an earlier federal-provincial initiative. The key objectives of that program were to improve access to affordable housing that is safe, sound, suitable and sustainable for households across Ontario; provide service manager and housing components with the flexibility to meet local needs and priorities; and incorporate energy efficiency requirements and accessibility into affordable housing units and building design.

Since 2003, our government's investment of more than \$2.5 billion means we have built and repaired more than 270,000 units and provided 35,000 rent supplements for Ontario families in need. To date, Speaker, Ontario's housing investments since 2003 have created over 57,000 jobs across the province.

Our long-term affordable housing strategy provides more flexibility to achieve better results for people. This complements and supports our new vision for affordable housing: helping to build a strong foundation and better future for Ontario families while stimulating the economy in communities across the province.

Speaker, this government understands that affordable housing opens doors to a better and brighter future for everyone. It allows Ontarians to focus on their jobs, education and the security of their families.

What we learned from our consultation for our long-term affordable housing strategy is that a good housing strategy must be focused on people. The rent increase guideline amendment supports that vision.

As the minister said, we believe that passing this proposed legislation would do a great deal to help those Ontario renters who say that they worry about paying the rent each month. We need to take steps to make housing more affordable and ensure that Ontario's most vulnerable citizens have a safe, stable and secure environment to call home—a place that allows them to focus on their health and well-being and the education and happiness of their children and allows them the best possible chance to contribute to society.

I urge the members to support second reading of Bill 19 and help make the rent increase guideline more stable and predictable.

Speaker, as I was saying in response to the member from Welland before, I do hope that the bill will go through the House as it's being debated today and that we will have an opportunity to indeed, not only through the committee, have a wider discussion among all the members of the House, but to hear further from those stakeholders that indeed have a stake in this particular piece of legislation.

Minister Wynne did say during the introduction of the bill the other day, and she did repeat it many times, that some of the contents of the bill that are expressed in the bill are a result of those particular consultations which we had throughout the province with the various stakeholders.

I think it's now two years ago, Speaker, when I was part of doing the consultation on the long-term affordable

housing strategy. I remember that in Hamilton, for example, we had a full house of people, as we had in Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Peterborough. Actually, one of the major components of the bill today is because of those consultations, where people said, "From month to month, from year to year, we have no idea what our rent is going to be." As the member from Welland well said, people are worried, not only if they have a job, but it's how to pay. It is because we wanted to give these renters peace of mind; that now they have four years where they can say, "My rent: I know how much it's going to be every time there's going to be an increase." Of course, there is protection, as well, that when the landlord wants to increase the rent, he has to give, I believe, 90 days' notice, so it's not a shock. Therefore, I think it's important for families in Ontario to know, and to know in advance, that it's going to be a rental increase.

Why do we have a bottom of 1% to 2.5%? As I said before, we had a high of 6% or 8% increases, and that is a real shock to tenants. Therefore, today, Speaker, in order to maintain the existing stock in good condition, good repair—and yes, there are still a lot of units out there that are in completely dilapidated condition. At least landlords will have some money coming in to maintain those repairs and give peace of mind to tenants in saying, "My rent will not go up more than 2.5%." If there is some accord between the landlord and the tenants—they do not wish to abide by the 1%—by all means, that is an agreement that is free; it's up to the tenant and the landlord to conduct an agreement.

1550

But Speaker, I believe this piece of legislation goes a long way to give our families peace of mind, to concentrate on their jobs, to concentrate on growing their families, on doing other things, having the kids participate in recreation facilities. It is peace of mind that is important for our tenants, and this particular piece of legislation will go a long way in providing that to our people, the tenants of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I've been listening to the member York West, in his speech, talking about Bill 19, which is An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline. Frankly, I thought he was talking about some other bill because he was going on about affordable housing, homelessness and all kinds of things with the federal government. This bill is a one-page bill, and it basically does one thing; that is, put a floor of a 1% increase of rent to a ceiling of 2.5%, and that's about it. I'm not quite sure what the member from York West's speech was all about, but the bill is one page, and that's what it deals with.

Mr. Speaker, I should say the thing that I'm hearing most in my riding from people in terms of housing is about the huge increases in hydro bills that people are faced with paying. For some people it's as high as 75% just in the last couple of years, and that's making it very difficult for them to afford to stay in their homes. Of

course, we know that the main cause of that increase in hydro rates is the McGuinty government's Green Energy Act, which is forecasted to raise rates another 46% in the next five years. That's what I'm hearing.

I hear from quite a few small landlords in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. They come in and see me and tell me horror stories, where they have tenants who know the rules; they go through the fact that they haven't paid the bill, then they draw out the eviction process, then they end up damaging the unit, and they lose their shirt on it. They tell me there's not enough balance on the landlord's side of this, particularly for the small landlords—they're not necessarily all that professional or don't necessarily know all the rules.

So it seems to me that we need a little bit more balance for the small landlords, because if we want to have rental accommodation out there, we need these small landlords to be able to feel like they're protected and not losing their shirt every time they rent an accommodation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for London–Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Good afternoon, and thank you, Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite from York West for his delivery on Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

I did find one comment very interesting in the House today that was spoken by the member from Welland, about making housing a human right. That's something that's a basic need for every human. When I was in school we talked about shelter and food; they're two basic human survival elements that you need to make it in this world. So having housing as a human right is certainly something that we all need to remember, that everyone should have a home to live in.

I also recall last week that a member talked about a speech that was given for CBC—a young girl was talking about what a home is—and that the speech was really endearing. They talked about that the home is physical, but also a home is family, the people that live in it and the memories that you create, so everyone deserves to have a place where they feel safe, that's affordable.

This bill does give some comfort in the fact that the rent won't go up by 6% or 10%. It's still increasing it by 1% to 2.5%, and that's a little relief, but there's always the other factors, that life in this province has become so unaffordable for many. We need to do more in respect to rent regulation and rent controls and making sure that tenants who are in a position where they are on low incomes can afford to stay in that home and have a right to a safe and secure house and affordable housing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I had the opportunity to listen very intently to the speech from my colleague from York West. The member from York West has had a long history of housing and rental housing here in Toronto when he started his political career as a very distinguished



councillor here in Toronto and then served on Metro council.

I know that when I talk to people in Toronto today, there's a yearning to go back to what they thought was the golden era, when Metro council was in force, when there were separate cities here in Toronto and the co-ordinating body was through Metro council. They look fondly back on that golden era.

The member's speech today is interesting. I remind you, Mr. Speaker and members of this House, that some 37 years ago—1975—the minority government of William Grenville Davis, in co-operation with Robert Fletcher Nixon and Stephen Lewis, the first rental legislation in Ontario was passed. It was a topic of intense conversation during the provincial election of 1975.

Some 37 years later, we're building on that great legacy of Mr. Davis. I trust that my colleagues in the opposition, based on that great history with Mr. Davis and, indeed, the third party—to come together on Bill 19 to forge a consensus with this bill in terms of rental legislation control in the province of Ontario.

Indeed, of course, the member from York West spent some time talking about our affordable housing strategy since we've been engaged on it with the federal government. Let me say: Federal governments of two political stripes have worked with us, the administration of Mr. Martin and now the administration of Prime Minister Harper, knowing full well that it's important to have co-operation with provinces in the field of housing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment a bit on Bill 19, legislation with respect to rent guidelines. As has been pointed out, it's obviously bare bones legislation. It's pretty sparse. I'm actually not clear why this could not be done through regulation. To take our time with a bill like this—it might be more palatable if there had been some ideas or some policy presented in this piece of legislation for all of us to consider.

I know that the member for York West indicated that the bill was as a result of consultation. I was not aware of any meetings down my way with respect to this legislation. I'm not sure to what extent landlords were consulted as far as these guidelines. But I'll take it as presented: It's the result of consultations.

I feel that this legislation is actually a result of the HST. That has a very significant impact on people who have houses or apartment buildings. It's obviously an impact on tenants. Someone does have to pay the extra burden of this tax. I just got the snow removal bill for my office. I was kind of taken aback at how much it cost, given the warm winter that we had. But you now pay additional tax on things like snow removal, landscaping, obviously any repairs or maintenance ongoing, certainly with older buildings. I think most of the buildings are, on average, 40 years old.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I now return to the member for York West, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I'd like to thank the members for their comments: my colleague from Peterborough here, Haldimand-Norfolk, London-Fanshawe and Parry Sound-Muskoka—this beautiful piece of country that is most cherished, not so much by renters, because it has become very unaffordable, I would say. Perhaps the only thing that is most common in their renting may be the cottage or a cottage for a week or so during the summer. But other than that, I have to say that it's a beautiful part of our country, and the member from that particular area has addressed the content of this bill.

**1600**

It is not so much the one page or two pages of the bill, but it is the content of the bill itself. Let me say this: This is exactly what the tenants were looking for, and I'm very pleased that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has delivered today so that they have peace of mind. Now, for the next four years they know that their rent will not go any higher than 2.5%.

Let me remind the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka that I was sitting on the other side where he's sitting today and I remember so vividly seeing Mr. Al Leach, the then Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, where the next day they came into the House after the election and they cancelled all the housing policies, period, including those projects with funding and with a building permit. So I have to say that no government, other than this particular government today, has done so much more for building affordable housing or providing housing and protection for tenants in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** We are debating Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, for one main reason: the HST. The HST, as you will recall, added costs to many services that landlords require: snow removal, now subject to HST; landscaping, now subject to HST; home improvement services, now subject to HST; hydro, in many cases, subject to HST, and the list goes on.

The PC caucus warned the government about the risks of the HST and the new costs that it would impose on landlords. The McGuinty Liberals ignored the warnings. They pushed new costs on landlords, leaving them with little choice but to raise rents. So often that seems to be this government's attitude: Let somebody else pay. But we know that it usually doesn't work that way, to let somebody else pay.

It's one of the reasons I ran for office, to try to correct this attitude that the government is free to spend without restraint because, after all, somebody can pay. The people of Ontario have paid dearly for this approach.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I want to use the rest of my time during this debate to deliver my maiden speech.

It is an honour and a privilege to represent the people of Perth-Wellington. Our first and foremost responsibility is to the people of our ridings, our constituents. We're here to serve them.

Bert Johnson knew that well. Many will remember Bert, who served as the MPP for Perth–Middlesex from 1995 to 2004, and as Deputy Speaker of the House. Like me, Bert comes from a farming background. He once remarked that when a farmer finishes plowing his field at the end of the day, he can look around and see his work. However, Bert noted that after a long day at Queen's Park, it might not always be possible to see the plowed field.

Jean Wilson taught me the importance of public service. Mrs. Wilson was my English and civics teacher at Ridgetown College, where I graduated in 1968. Her lesson was this: No matter what you do, no matter where you go, get involved in your community. It was, for me, a very important lesson. Whether coaching hockey, serving in municipal government or volunteering, you'll get so much out of it and, most importantly, you'll benefit your community. That's what I've tried to do as a long-time member of the Monkton Lions Club, that's what I've tried to do as a member of the Monkton arena building committee, and that's what I've tried to do in municipal politics.

In 2003, I was privileged to have been elected to council in the municipality of North Perth, where I served two terms. Municipal politics is something of a family tradition. My father served on council in Grey township in Huron county.

Family is important to me. I grew up on a farm in Essex county, until my family bought a dairy farm near Monkton, Ontario. For 39 years I've been married to my wife, Jane. Together, we've operated a decorating business and raised our three boys, who are now married with children of their own. I want to thank Jane, and I want to thank our entire family for their strong support along the journey to Queen's Park. I couldn't have done it without them. When we have free time, Jane and I like to spend it with our grandchildren. But free time can be hard to find, and I'm sure my colleagues would agree.

Public service compels us to serve our constituents to the best of our ability. It requires us to listen, to assist where possible and to act on their behalf. Before the last election, I knew it was time to act. I was disappointed with many of the policies of this government. It was spending too much and listening too little. It failed to listen to small and rural communities, in particular when it passed the so-called Green Energy Act. That legislation concentrated power in Toronto, grabbing it from municipalities and giving it to the McGuinty government. That was wrong.

From my experience on municipal council, I also knew about problems with MPAC and OMPF, for example. The government assured us that they would be fixed, but they weren't fixed, and municipalities continue to pay the price. We couldn't count on the government to follow through on their promises, and I thought it was time for a government that would.

Knowing that our kids were grown up and remembering that important lesson from Mrs. Wilson, I knew I needed to run. I knew I needed to make a difference

where I could. It's an honour to represent the people of the great riding of Perth–Wellington.

We are home to a thriving agricultural industry. It's an honour to represent farmers and to stand up for their interests. We're making progress through initiatives like business risk management, which I've long supported along with the PC caucus. But farmers know that now is not the time to stand still. It's time to take a real look at red tape that is strangling too many jobs in too many rural communities.

We're home to a thriving arts community. Perth–Wellington has two world-class theatre companies, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and the Drayton festival. It's an honour to represent everyone who works in the cultural industry and everybody who appreciates its value.

Perth–Wellington is also home to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. I want to encourage all members to visit the hall of fame this summer and spend some time in beautiful St Marys.

Perth–Wellington is also home to the largest Irish festival in North America. For 35 years, Listowel has held Paddyfest, a celebration of Irish heritage and culture. Paddyfest is a celebration lasting two weeks. It features a parade, a gala fundraising event and many bowls of homemade Irish stew made by local church groups. Paddyfest raises upwards of \$100,000 for charitable projects. I want to congratulate Matt Edgar, chairman of this year's Paddyfest, and the many volunteers who made this year's Paddyfest such a success.

We also remembered last year's Paddyfest, when tragedy struck. Two volunteer firefighters, Ray Walter and Ken Rea, died while fighting a fire at a local store. They made the ultimate sacrifice. Shaken, the community came together. We supported the families of the fallen firefighters, and we supported all the firefighters in North Perth.

Perth–Wellington is home to a strong manufacturing base. It is an honour to represent everyone in that sector. Our local manufacturers have so much to offer and have driven so much of the prosperity that we in Perth–Wellington have historically enjoyed.

Today, however, Ontario has a manufacturing crisis. In fact, since the McGuinty government came to power, a staggering 293,700 manufacturing jobs have vanished. Meanwhile, Ontario's overall unemployment rate has been above the national average for 62 consecutive months.

Perth–Wellington is not immune. Last year, we learned that the FRAM plant in Stratford would close, meaning the loss of 300 jobs. Just last week, our community suffered another blow: Cooper Standard in Mitchell announced 107 layoffs.

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We must do better, Mr. Speaker. People expect the government to fix what isn't working and adopt new policies that would attract and sustain our manufacturing sector. The government could start by backing off on its



expensive energy experiments and return energy costs to competitive levels, but they've refused.

For too many constituents, this is a challenging time. Coping with the rising costs of living or, worse, a job loss is a struggle. Every day our office receives letters, emails and phone calls from across the riding and beyond. Some are calling with good news: an anniversary, a celebration of some sort. But very often people call wanting to express their concerns about a problem they face or about a problem the government is unwilling to confront.

I've already expressed a few of their concerns, and I want to take this opportunity to voice a few more. People are concerned about the future of their schools and hospitals. They demand high-quality care, and they need it close to home. I want to again express my support for every hospital in Perth-Wellington and the service they provide.

Last Friday, I attended the grand opening of the MRI suite at Stratford General Hospital. The Minister of Health was there too. This much-needed medical technology wouldn't have come to Stratford without strong community support. I want to thank the hospital foundation for their outstanding work. Over 10,000 donors contributed over 30,000 gifts to the Heart and Soul campaign. They set an ambitious goal of raising \$20 million, and they've gone way beyond it.

I am also looking forward to attending the grand opening of the Fisher Family Primary Care Centre in Listowel. This innovative approach to family medicine is an asset to our community, but we still face challenges in health care. Too many are still without a family doctor. Too many in Perth-Wellington, especially in Stratford, don't have one, and we're asking the Minister of Health for help. Many of our constituents remain concerned about the future of emergency care at St. Marys Memorial Hospital. They're asking for the emergency department to remain open 24/7.

Our highway infrastructure is also on the minds of many constituents, and here's what we need from the Minister of Transportation: Many people from Stratford to the outskirts of New Hamburg have expressed concerns about the future of Highways 7 and 8. The ministry has selected a route to rebuild the highway, but many people have concerns, including the impact of a new highway on local agriculture. And many are concerned about the safety on the existing route. I plan to help ensure that the ministry hears all of my constituents' values.

My constituents are also expressing their views about this government's changes to the Ontario Trillium benefit, changes that have left some of our most vulnerable citizens without the refunds they had rightly expected. From a government running a \$16-billion deficit, they're being told that they can't manage their own money. That's incredible.

On March 14, I hosted a public wind energy town hall meeting. I am grateful to the member from Nipissing and the member from Huron-Bruce for their support and participation in that community event. People came from

across the riding to express their sincere and very serious concerns about the McGuinty government's wind-power-at-any-cost policy. They believe the McGuinty government is ignoring them, and I believe they're right.

I've already spoken about another group that matters to me—my grandchildren. I'm concerned about the mountain of debt they will inherit and I'm concerned that the present government has no credible plan to pay it down. We're already borrowing \$1.8 million every hour to cover the Liberals' deficit. Worse yet, the Liberals still appear to be on track to double the deficit to \$30 billion.

We in Perth-Wellington recognize the important values of personal responsibility and living within your means. We understand that principle as it applies to our households and our businesses. We don't understand it when a government tells us that somehow it shouldn't apply to them.

When the government doesn't live within its means, when taxes go up, our economy is threatened. When the cost of energy goes up, jobs disappear. For me, that's the lesson of the past eight years.

It wasn't always that way. There was a time when Ontario was the economic engine of Canada. I refuse to believe that those days are over and that we should give up hope. Our leader and our caucus have advanced ideas, including reducing red tape, reforming the apprenticeship system and lowering energy costs. These policies would help rebuild Ontario's economy. They would help ensure that the future can be brighter than the past.

Whatever our party and whatever our background, we should always look for ways to build strong communities: large and small, urban and rural. I've already mentioned a few examples of people doing just that. They're doing it in the arts community. They're doing it in health care, in business and in our community festivals.

In the time I have left, I want to mention just a few more.

Gary Fizell was a good friend of mine and a leader on the Monkton Wildcats hockey team. He suffered from ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. When Gary's health declined, he and his family had to move into a more accessible home. The community came to their aid, raising money for a new home that could accommodate Gary. Sadly, after a 10-year battle, Gary passed away. To this day, the community holds a fundraiser in his honour. All proceeds are donated to ALS research.

Harvest for Hunger is another example of service to the community. One hundred and twenty combines took the field to set a world record for harvesting 160 acres of soybeans. They narrowly missed the mark, but finished in just 11 minutes and 49 seconds. More important, they did it to raise awareness and raise funds to fight hunger. In total, they raised over \$1 million.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, we should all look for ways to keep the focus where it belongs: on service to the community. We should support it and we should lead it, whenever and wherever there is a need. We should promote its value at every opportunity and encourage that spirit in others.

As MPP for Perth–Wellington, keeping in mind Jean Wilson's belief in the importance of public service, I intend to do my part.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I want to congratulate and officially welcome the member from Perth–Wellington. I believe that was his maiden speech in this House. We certainly appreciate his comments today. I think he raises a couple of interesting points that we've heard raised throughout the last session and prior to us actually being in this House.

One was on the HST. Certainly, New Democrats have, from the inception, from the beginning, fought against the HST, not only in this House but at the federal level, where it was imposed and a deal was brokered between the province and the feds. So we agree on that point.

Hydro rates, of course: We fought that one too from the beginning, when we saw the deregulation and privatization of our Ontario Hydro regime start to add incredible stress and burdens to manufacturing, to homeowners, to residents and to communities. That's certainly where the dominoes started falling, in our opinion.

I will mention as well that I had the pleasure of having dinner with the member's cousin at a recent event this past weekend, at a wild game dinner put on by the sportsmen's club in Woodslee. It was a great wild game dinner. We talked a little bit of politics, talked a little bit of farming, and talked about how honourable the member is. I know he has deep connections within this province that extend into my riding, even, of Essex.

All told, I think the member raises some questions that we've heard time and time again here in terms of where this government is heading, how it's going to make life more affordable, or does it even intend to make life more affordable in this province for people and for businesses? It is ultimately how we get to that point that will be the challenge for us all. It may be that we have to go through another election, and successive elections, to finally get there. But maybe we can avoid that and all work together in this House towards a common goal.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

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**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It's always enlightening to hear a maiden speech, to the member from Perth–Wellington. Perth–Wellington, I know, as a great Montreal Canadiens fan—hard times this particular season, a little like the Toronto Maple Leafs. But of course the great Howie Morenz, better known as the Stratford Streak, came from Stratford, Ontario, father-in-law of Bernie Geoffrion, who was the great Canadiens star in the 1950s, along with Béliveau and Richard and Dickie Moore.

And of course the famous Stratford Festival attracts people from all over the world to see some of the best entertainment put on by actors and actresses.

A number of years ago, many of us in this House had the opportunity to be on the Carson farm in that riding for the International Plowing Match that attracted people

from right across the province of Ontario to enjoy the great hospitality that the riding of Perth–Wellington has to offer. My friend across the aisle was there. I didn't see him that day, but I know he was enjoying, as I said, the great hospitality that Perth–Wellington has to offer.

To the member from Perth–Wellington, we all experience the first time when you step into this august chamber. I know when I came here in 2003—when you think about it for one moment, the very select men and women who have served in this chamber from 1867 to 2012, it is a very select group of people. We take on the great responsibilities of representing our ridings, and I know my friend the member from Perth–Wellington will continue in the great tradition, as his predecessors before him, putting together the thoughts and the needs of the people in that riding.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm really pleased to respond to the member from Perth–Wellington's maiden speech comments today. I think he sort of follows in line with a lot of good people that we've seen represent that particular riding in this Legislature. I know my colleague Bert Johnson, in his first term and my first term here, was a person I really enjoyed. He spent a lot of time as the Deputy Speaker, and John Wilkinson became a friend as well, on the government side. All these gentlemen, including Mr. Pettapiece, represent the best interests of their community.

And let's face it, that is one of the more beautiful farming communities and diverse communities in our province. I've been through there a number of times. When my daughter went to the University of Western Ontario we used to come back up through there when we dropped her off, and I was always amazed at the size and the quality of the farms in that area. Then, of course, to join with that, they've got something like the Drayton festival, which also has a theatre in my riding, in Penetanguishene, but also the Stratford Festival, which is one of the key festivals in our whole country today.

I wish him well in his time here at Queen's Park. I like the fact that he's very grounded to his family and community, and that's probably why he's the MPP today and will likely be the MPP for a number of years.

Finally, I want to say that the first time I had an opportunity to meet with him myself, I was critic for Community Safety and Correctional Services. He brought it up in his comments here, the two volunteer firefighters that lost their lives in Listowel in that tragic fire, something that just really brings you back to home in rural Ontario when you see that happening. I was actually at the funeral with Mr. Pettapiece.

I just want to say, overall, I wish him all the best in his time here at Queen's Park. Congratulations on a great maiden speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's a pleasure to be able to reply to the maiden speech of the member from Perth–



Wellington. I was writing down notes and about to launch into how much we agreed that we hated the HST when I found out it was a maiden speech. The member and I spend a fair bit of time talking about crops because we're both farmers. I really enjoy that. Today we were talking about how in Perth–Wellington they're planting and how we are still wondering whether we should take off the snow blower. Perth–Wellington is one of the few areas that I am truly jealous of. It is a beautiful place.

A lot of people know a lot of history about Perth–Wellington, but there's one thing that I know that maybe some of the other members don't. There's a road in Perth–Wellington—and I don't know the name of the road, but I know it exists—that produces more milk than anywhere else in the province. I think it's something—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Well, I don't know what it's called, but I know, because I've heard about it a lot of times on the DFO board.

Something else we share is, we've both hosted a plowing match in our area, and we both did a very good job. I attended the plowing match at Carson's farm. It was an incredible event. It's one of the places where I learned how you should run a plowing match.

I'd like to congratulate you and the people who helped you volunteer. Something you mentioned in your speech several times is the volunteer ethic. It takes that type of ethic to get elected. It takes that type of ethic to do a job like this. In the short time I've known you, I think we share that as well.

I look forward to working with the member. I would like to say that I don't always agree with all of his views, but I look forward to working with him. We do agree that the HST is one of the things that's pushing up rental in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Perth–Wellington for his two-minute reply.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Speaker, and thanks to everybody else, all of you, for your comments. It was certainly appreciated.

I've been a volunteer since I joined a Lions Club in Moncton, on an official basis, for almost 20 years—no, it's more than 20 years; since 1987. My family have been in the volunteer business for many years, and it has driven me to not only get involved in municipal politics but, certainly, in this area too. We expect no reward, but I've been to a number of volunteer events in our riding where certificates were handed out for years of service and different things like that. There's nothing wrong with giving somebody a pat on the back. Volunteers work for nothing—usually it costs them money—and it's nice to give them a pat on the back once in a while.

Ontario is a wonderful place to live. We're certainly proud of the areas we live in. We've had many accomplishments in Perth–Wellington over the years, and I'm sure all the members have had significant accomplishments in their areas over the years. Plowing matches are

one of them. We've actually got one coming up next year, in 2013. It's going to be in the Mitchell area. I'm very proud of the fact that we don't stop at one; we just keep on going.

Anyway, it's certainly an honour to represent the riding. I hope that we can work successfully with all three parties in the House to try to achieve not only debt reduction but making our communities a better place to live, so that our children do have a future as they're looking forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I am quite excited to add my voice to this discussion as well, to debate on G19, the government's Bill 19.

We've already heard some of the purpose of this bill. To begin with, it's important to recognize that applying a cap or making some step in the right direction to make housing more affordable is a positive step. I think we can all agree with that. I think all our comments are going to echo the fact that this is a step but it's a small step. The concern is that a lot of work needs to be done in this area, particularly when it comes to affordable housing.

Some of the big concerns are these: A vast number of people are spending half of their income on housing, and when housing is so expensive, when it consumes half of your income, it cuts into your ability to afford other necessities. That's essentially a risk factor, one of the largest risk factors that impacts those who are most vulnerable in our society. It affects the poor; it affects women; it affects people who are in dire or desperate circumstances.

While the bill proposes to set the increase to be held at 1% to 2.5%, let's look at some of the issues that affect Ontarians across the province with respect to their circumstances and affordable housing in general.

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There are 1,301,395 tenant households in Ontario. Those people who are affected by rent, or the increase in rent, constitute one third of our province's population. Essentially, one in five, or 20%, of Ontarians pay 50% or more of their household income on shelter costs. That's a sizable number of people who are spending that half of their income, as I indicated, on their rent. What that results in is that other necessities—child care, medicine, food, clothing—other basic necessities are then pushed to the back. They have to make these crucial decisions on whether they can afford to pay their rent or whether they can afford to put food on the table, pay for medicine, pay for their necessities.

What's of even greater concern is that there are 152,077 low-income households across Ontario who are waiting for social housing, and this number, at 7.4%, is increasing. The real concern here, the real problem, is that we have a housing crisis, particularly an affordable housing crisis, which is not being addressed. It's important to put a cap on the rent increases, but again, that's a small step in addressing the really crushing problem of affordable housing.

The United Nations, in article 25, indicates that housing is not simply a luxury or a privilege. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates—declares—that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services....” So, in fact, the notion of having housing is not a luxury, it’s not an esoteric concept—it’s a fundamental right that a human being should have a shelter. That’s something that we should appreciate as a right, recognize as a right.

The reason for this is that it’s a positive right; it requires that the state do something to ensure that its populace, its people, are taken care of at least at that minimal level, those who are vulnerable, those who can’t take care of themselves, those who have special needs, that at a basic level, at a fundamental level, we have a responsibility to ensure that everyone has adequate housing. It’s something that’s been declared as a human right, and it’s something that we should uphold.

What’s particularly concerning is that in Ontario the Liberals voted down an amendment to their recent housing act that would have recognized this as a human right. And why it’s so important to recognize housing as a human right is that it adds the necessary gravity to the situation. It adds the necessary level of importance to the notion that we should house our citizens, we should ensure that they have a roof over their heads.

The NDP has fought, and will continue to fight, to ensure that this fundamental right, the right to housing, is recognized in Ontario law. That’s something that I stand behind. I hope to see the day where it is recognized as a human right.

I’d like to turn now and discuss some of the specific issues that are affecting my riding in Bramalea–Gore–Malton and in the Peel region in general. I can tell you that time and time again constituents have come to my office and have expressed their concern over the fact that there are not spaces available for them, for their family members, for people who are living with extra needs and have special needs and require particularly unique housing criteria or requirements—that there is simply not space available for them.

There are a number of people who have come to me with complaints that they don’t have a place which is clean, a place which is warm enough; they don’t have a roof over their heads where they can access the services that they require. Many people are forced to make do with housing that doesn’t have the necessary accessibility, but are making do without that and putting themselves in difficult situations simply to get into and out of their homes. It’s something that should generate great concern in our minds, that we have this lack or this inability to house our constituents in our community.

In Peel region there were 15,301 households—15,000—on the waiting list for social assistance in 2011. That’s 10.1% of the total active households on the list. There are people who are on waiting lists for years—for 10 years—and they haven’t been able to find adequate

housing. The service manager area of Peel region indicates that singles and families on the chronological waiting list are not gaining access to subsidized housing and are waiting longer and longer on these lists. As I indicated, some people have waited 10 years. In fact, some of the approximate wait times for social housing are estimated up to 15 years, which is among the highest in the province.

Peel region is a growing demographic. It’s an area with booming population, booming new houses, but what’s lacking in the growth of that region is affordable housing. Peel region is ranked in the top five areas experiencing the largest increase in the number of households waiting for housing. While the population is booming, while we have growth in the housing market in general, we have an unacceptable level of delay or waiting time to access social housing for people who are in the most dire circumstances, those who are in the most difficult and vulnerable positions in society.

So it’s a real concern. It’s a live issue. It’s an issue that has a face. It’s the face of the poor, it’s the face of children, it’s the face of women. They are left without adequate housing, and they are left waiting for a decade. Imagine waiting more than a decade to have adequate housing. It’s simply unacceptable—I welcome the new Speaker—and it’s not something we should accept in this province. It’s something that we should make a clear stand on here and now that affordable housing is a priority, it’s a real need and something that’s not been addressed. In fact, the government has been very ineffective in addressing a long-term solution to this housing crisis, particularly when it comes to affordable housing.

After eight years, the government finally developed a long-term affordable housing strategy, but its strategy did not include funding, did not include any targets and didn’t include any timelines. So we have a strategy after eight years of waiting, but the strategy has very little meaning when there aren’t specific funding targets and there aren’t specific timelines.

What is of grave concern, addressing our budget, is that the proposed budget does not include any money, any funding—not a penny—for affordable housing. We must recognize that while social housing is a social benefit—it benefits those in our society, as indicated, who are most vulnerable—it also has an economic advantage. It’s something that can create jobs and stimulate local and provincial economies, and it’s also an avenue for generating greater tax revenue. While it’s of crucial concern as a societal interest, as a benefit to society, it also benefits the economy. When we invest in housing, we can stimulate the economy and also generate more revenue.

The Dalton McGuinty government promised 20,000 affordable units in four years and has only delivered 80% in eight years. Again, this is another broken promise, a promise that was made to the people of Ontario to ensure that this issue would be addressed, and it was sorrowfully not addressed.



Again, broken promises: In the 2003 provincial election, the Liberals promised, "We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited rent increase on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone." That was a promise in 2003. Here we stand in 2012; this promise has not been fulfilled.

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The promise was convoluted with the notion of regional rent control. What resulted is that this promise, which was made in an election, was never completed. We didn't see it fulfilled.

What do we need in the province? We need a clear, thought-out, long-term plan that actually has some teeth to it, that actually has some funding to it, that actually has a timeline, some targets set so we can actually address this problem. Instead of paying it lip service, instead of making small steps, let's generate a plan that can sweep and revolutionize the housing issue and that can really take care of our community, that can really address the concerns of those who need this addressed.

To make this plan effective, to make this long-term strategy to address the housing crisis, to address affordable housing to make it more effective, some of the things we need to do are to recognize that there is a significant gap between household incomes and market rents. There are those whose income levels are simply so far lower, beyond what the market rent rates are set at, that they are simply not in a position to afford housing. That's a reality. In order to make a long-term strategy that is effective, we need to recognize that that is a position that many families are in, where their income levels are simply so far imbalanced when compared to the market rates that are set right now.

One strategy that could address this problem is that a housing allowance or a benefit program, particularly for low-income households, would help offset this imbalance. We have people with such low income levels, and market rates are so high, that if there was a specific targeted housing benefit, it would address that gap. It would allow some equity to flow for those people who are in those dire straits. A progressive long-term affordable housing strategy must also ensure an end to vacancy decontrol to ensure that rent levels are kept at something that's actually truly affordable.

The NDP has taken considerable steps to raise this issue, first and foremost, Mr. Speaker, and also to encourage some real change, moving forward—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member has the floor. I apologize.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I indicated, the NDP has taken steps to address some of these issues and has proposed some real solutions. So I'd like to talk about some of the issues that were raised by both my colleague from Welland and as well our colleague from Parkdale—High Park.

In September 2010, Cheri DiNovo introduced a private member's bill to strengthen some of the issues surrounding tenant protection and to highlight some of the concerns that were raised, I'm sure, in her riding, but

issues that affect people across Ontario. Some of the issues included strengthening rent control. One of those was to address this issue of rising rent rates by closing the loophole which currently allows landlords to impose uncontrolled rent increases on tenants renting vacant units by ensuring that rent regulation applies to all rental units, whether vacant or occupied. This is a meaningful way of addressing the issue that the Liberals have promised to correct but had never been addressed. This is a direct approach to solve that problem.

Another suggestion which was made was to ensure rent control applies to all private market rental units, regardless of date of construction, by eliminating the exemption from rent regulation for newer buildings.

Again, what we need to take in terms of affordable housing is a holistic but practical and direct approach to really address the issue. Again, while it's often said the opposition will criticize bills, this bill presents an opportunity to engage in the discussion. We can talk about housing; we can talk about affordable housing. It opens the doors, but we must recognize that it's a small step, that simply addressing the rent increase alone is a small drop in the bucket, so to say. It's only a step where there is a huge vacuum left unaddressed. There is a myriad of other problems which are not being addressed, Mr. Speaker, and which should be addressed, which should be raised.

Some of those issues include individuals who are living in very deplorable conditions. There are slumlord landlords who have units which are improperly maintained. They charge high rents, and they prey on those who are, again, most vulnerable. This is not a minor circumstance. This is the lives of people in Ontario, people who are living in deplorable conditions, who are living in unsanitary, unsafe conditions. This is a real situation that is affecting people in Ontario, that's affecting their ability to live.

**Interjection:** It's affecting their health.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** In fact, it's directly tied into their health. When we talk about the rising cost of health care, this is an area where we can see that health care also should not be viewed in a vacuum. If we recognize that health care costs are rising, we must also recognize that there are a myriad of factors that influence your health. One of them is where you live. If you live in an environment which is healthy, which is sanitary, you will be healthier. If we want to reduce the level of money we are spending in hospitals, we can promote health. We can also ensure that our citizens, our community, live in healthier places. This would be a long-term and holistic, wide solution to a problem that has been addressed in a more narrow way.

Let's put more funding directly into health care, which we must. But we also have to look at other issues involving your health, such as where you live.

The government has a responsibility for cracking down on those landlords who delay repairs, on those landlords who treat tenants unfairly, who don't maintain their homes or their rental units at a minimum standard of

safety and of health. I think it's without hyperbole that I can state that the government has failed those individuals living in those conditions, and the government must own up to its obligation to ensure that there is proper oversight of those tenants who are living in those conditions.

What the NDP has proposed and what we need to do is increase the amount or the number of affordable units in Ontario. Tens of thousands of Ontarians are stuck in rundown and unaffordable apartments because they are waiting for years for affordable housing. Something we have proposed before and would be a true step in the right direction is building—something the NDP has proposed is to build over 50,000 affordable housing units over the next 10 years. That would address some of the concerns, and it would be a step—a true step—in the right direction, a leap in the right direction. That's the direction we need to be headed if we want to ensure that people in Ontario are taken care of, if we want to really address the issue that housing is a human right. It's something that should be valued at that level, and it should be given the proper respect that it deserves.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm glad of the comments made by my friend from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, good comments. I'm happy to make a few of my points that I picked up during your talk.

Affordable housing: There is a crisis out there, and you don't have to stick to urban Ontario; go right to rural Ontario. I'll tell you right now that in quite a bit of my riding, there are huge wait-lists, and there's nothing there for these people except to wait to get in some sort of housing.

I do note that housing funding is the first thing that's usually hit when there are cuts going by. I make reference to the city of London, which was trying to balance their budget last year, which they did, but affordable housing funding was right on the top of their chopping block. I think the government's role is to not blame the city for going after that. They're trying to balance it. I think the government should start working with cities to give them more funds. We, on our PC side, have made this mention numerous times. Let's fix the arbitration system, because that's bankrupting all our rural communities, including urban cities like London.

1650

Another point that I have picked up on is that the government continually says that they're uploading the costs of the public health unit in London-Middlesex when in fact they still are falling behind in picking up their share. I would hope that the Minister of Health would be looking at the funding that they're doing for the London-Middlesex public health unit and in fact come up with the money that they aren't supplying.

We also need to look at costs to tenants and landlords, trying to keep them down. Our party has put forward—and we passed through second reading—removing the HST from our heating bills. We're hoping that the government calls that to committee soon and we can get

it out here and get it passed before the next winter comes along.

We also have to look at partnerships for affordable housing. The private sector is there to give us some answers. We've been waiting and waiting for the government to do something, and we've been waiting in Elgin county for a long time for a hospital rebuild. The government's promise from the last election was broken, and they decided to change their mind—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Welland.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** While I was listening to my colleague here doing his rotation, I had a chance to look at the addendum to the Ontario budget. There are a lot of cuts proposed in this budget for the—

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** You're in the wrong seat, Cindy.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Sorry.

There are a lot of cuts proposed here for the Ministry of Community and Social Services: almost \$18 million for support services across programs. On page 7, Municipal Affairs and Housing: an \$11-million cut. Here we are talking today about the need for affordable housing and how there's no money, but we have a budget that's actually cutting another \$11 million out of the pie.

Then on page 11, "Reform the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit ... and Home Repairs": a \$162.5-million cut over three years. These are people who often need assistance. They may be newcomers to our communities.

On page 17, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing: another \$100,000 cut around enforcement standards. I think I talked about that during my hour lead-in: how municipalities cannot afford these costs; they don't have the staff to actually do the enforcement. Yet we're cutting another \$100,000 out of the budget.

Then, on aboriginal affairs, there's probably about \$3.5 million being cut from people who live in the worst poverty of anyone who lives in our country.

I think the government needs to turn their mind to having a look at that budget as it impacts—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** In answer to the comments, which I have paid some attention to while I was doing some other business on the phone, I can appreciate the sentiments, Speaker. As a new member, I know that he's speaking on behalf of the people that he represents: the tenants in his community and of course the needs of tenants.

I have to remind not only the member but all the colleagues in the House that tenancy doesn't have any borders. We have tenants in metropolitan Toronto; we have them up in the north; we have them in the east, the west and all over the place. The needs: They're all the same.

I think we have to look at the reality, especially at this particular economic time, when, of course, we always



talk about job protection and security, and this is what people would like to hear from their elected representatives. I said “this particular economic time” because I think the bill addresses this very particular and unsettling economic time in our area. What’s the best thing we can do for our tenants? It’s to let them know and give them that protection, that peace of mind that they are looking for, so they know now that they have a four-year span during which they know what their rent increases are going to be. It may not necessarily be so, because if they are less than 2.5%, that may be negotiated with the landlord. But at least it will not go down to less than 1% or more than 2.5%.

I think this bill gives our tenants, indeed, the peace of mind that they are looking for so they can do other planning for their families—grow their families, their kids—recreation events and stuff like that, and grow their families in a very peaceful atmosphere.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I just want to say I enjoyed listening to the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton today on his thoughts on G19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act. As he said, this is a very small step towards the big problem of affordability, and there needs to be a lot more work done when it comes to affordability in this province and affordable housing.

As I was listening to the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, I got an email on my BlackBerry, and it was from the Argyle seniors’ group in my riding of London–Fanshawe. I met with them about two weeks ago, and one of the things that the seniors talked about was affordable housing. They wanted to know when this government is going to help seniors and build more affordable housing. Then, today, the text came in that she’s having a meeting with a gentleman in the affordable housing industry, to come and talk to seniors. So this is something that’s really on people’s minds.

Some of the most vulnerable people in our society are seniors. They’re on fixed incomes, and if they’re spending 30% to 40% to 50% on rental income, imagine what’s left for them to purchase food, drive a car and buy their prescriptions. We know that times are really tight, and when seniors have to worry about spending the rest of their income on whether they’re going to eat or be able to afford that prescription, it’s a really sad commentary on what we’re going through today in this economy. Affordable housing has to be a key issue that we keep in the forefront so that people can live with peace of mind.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments.

I return to the member for Bramalea–Malton—

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Gore–Malton. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to all the members who joined in the debate.

While I was listening to the comments of the members, I thought of another issue that hasn’t been raised. I’d like to address this issue that affects, I’m sure, many ridings across Ontario but is a particular concern in my

riding of Bramalea–Gore–Malton, and actually in Peel region in general. That is that if we don’t have a long-term strategy for housing or for affordable housing, if we don’t have the actual infrastructure in terms of units where people can move into—and there are long waiting lists for people—then the alternative that many people are turning to is basement apartments. In homes where houses have the space for it, many community residents are relying on the ability to rent a basement apartment. It’s an informal way of addressing the problem. It’s not a solution, but it’s an option.

My concern is that while the provincial government has imposed, or has legislated, a bill that requires municipalities to address this by forming a policy, this bill doesn’t require that basement apartments be legal. It’s an issue that affects many people—the landlord, who often uses the renting of a basement as a means of some additional income, supplementing their income. It also is a real option for students, for new Canadians. For families who are initially struggling and don’t have sufficient resources to buy a home, it’s a viable option.

We must ensure that there is a policy that makes these apartments legal, that addresses the fact that there are no other options in many communities. There are no housing units available, and a basement apartment is a real option for both the landlord and the tenant. It should be addressed; it should become an issue that gets the attention it deserves.

1700

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** It’s my pleasure to speak to this bill. It’s introduced by, of course, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I have the privilege of serving as the minister’s parliamentary assistant in that regard.

I think, first, what I’d like to do is put on the record for Hansard exactly what the relevant section of this legislation, Bill 19, says and what it does, because it’s a very simple bill.

Bill 19 has three sections, but the guts of the matter are contained in subsection 1(2), and I’m just going to put into Hansard what subsection 1(2) actually says, and then I want to talk about what the effect of it is and why we’ve done what we have done.

Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. Sorry. For the listeners, there was just a disturbance in front of me which distracted my thoughts. I thank the disturbers for reining in their enthusiasm for the remarks which I’m about to deliver.

Anyway, here’s what the section says: “The minister shall determine the guideline in effect for each calendar year as follows....” As you know, we had a system in the past which set the rental guidelines as a function of what the inflation numbers are from the federal government. In past years—in fact, just last year, that rate was as low as 0.7%, which of course was very favourable to—as it should be—the tenants. This year, for reasons having to do with the national economy and the international economy, that inflation index jumped up to 3.1%. So we have a situation where people living in rental accom-

modations who are managing their family dollars and managing their budgets very, very carefully had calculated—last year, they were paying 0.7%, and suddenly, overnight, their rent would have jumped 3.1%. That's a significant amount of money for families. Of course, that money has to be found somewhere in the family budget. Put yourself in a situation where you have seniors on very modest incomes or young families on modest incomes and all the expenses entailed in raising children, and suddenly they've got to find another 3% in that family budget to cover the rent increase that year. And that's 3% after taxes. That's 3% of your disposable income.

As I say, that rate took that jump. Nobody expected the inflation rate to take that jump, but there was a host of factors having to do with the international economy and oil prices, what was going on in Europe, what was going on in the United States, what was going on in the rest of Canada, that triggered that enormous jump. So our government decided that we had to bring some measure of greater predictability and greater fairness—and I say “greater predictability and greater fairness”—to even out the bumps so that we didn't have this situation as we've had in the past year or so where we went from, as I've said, 0.7% to 3.1%.

How have we done that? We've done that by amending the Residential Tenancies Act of 2006, and we've put in this section. This is the functioning section of Bill 19, and really it is going to determine how rental increases are calculated for the year. What the section actually says is that the minister—that's the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—will determine the guideline in effect for each calendar year. So every year, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will sit down and determine what that guideline is, what will be the permissible rent increase for the ensuing year. It moves it away from just a direct reaction to the inflation index, because that's an arbitrary number—as I said, last year it was 0.7%, and it jumped to 3.1%. So the minister is going to have the discretion to set the rent increase guidelines.

Now, it's not a complete discretion, because there are some parameters attached to that discretion, and here's what those parameters are. This is the heart of the legislation. This is how the actual dollar amount will be calculated on a rent increase. The section goes on to say that this is how the guideline will be set each year: “Subject to the limitations set out in paragraph 2, the guideline for a calendar year is the percentage change from year to year in the consumer price index for Ontario for prices of goods and services as reported monthly by Statistics Canada, averaged over the 12-month period...,” and that calculation is done in May of the previous year.

What it says is that the rent increase will be, as it has been in past years, a direct function of the inflation index that's maintained by the federal government. So we calculate that as a percentage and we know what that is, and then the minister can step in and adjust that calculation based on the consumer price index.

Now, how does the minister go about that calculation of adjusting what would otherwise be just a straight relationship to the inflation index? Well, the minister will apply this guideline: “The guideline for a calendar year shall be not less than 1% and not more than 2.5%.” So if the consumer price index, the inflation information that comes out of the federal government once a year—I'll give you an example. Let's say that it's 2% based on the inflation calculation; well, that would be the rent increase. Now, if that inflation index, let's say, is 3% or 4%, that won't be the rent increase because there will be a cap on the rent increase, and that cap is 2.5%. If the inflation index was, let's say, 0.3%, similarly the rent increase would not drop below 1%.

So we have a situation here where we're mindful of the needs of landlords for a reasonable minimum increase, and that would be 1%. We also have in mind the needs of the tenants, and for the tenants the maximum increase would be 2.5%. If the inflation index was somewhere between 1% and 2.5%, that would be the rent increase.

So there are really three numbers here that you have to keep in mind. I want to make this clear for the benefit of the viewing audience, because I've been getting a lot of questions in Willowdale, both from landlords and from tenants. They've been following the bill and they've been asking me, “But how does the calculation actually work? What does it mean?” Simply, to repeat for the benefit of everybody watching and for the benefit of Hansard, the rent increase will be one of three numbers. It will be whatever the inflation index is, published by the federal government, as long as that inflation index is somewhere between 1% and 2.5%. If it's below 1%, the landlord is covered because the landlord will get a minimum of 1%. If it's more than 2.5%, it's capped at that, and that protects the tenant. So now we have predictability. We know for sure that rent increases are going to be within those very, very narrow parameters.

1710

I say, and our government says, that that is fair for tenants and fair for landlords. And when you sit back and look at the kinds of numbers that are involved—1%, 2.5%—that also is reasonable. It's reasonable for all the parties concerned. So that's the mechanics of it.

I want to say a word about how the minister—because I've been asked this question: “When the minister is doing her calculation, assuming that the federal inflation index is somewhere between 1% and 2.5%, the minister has the discretion to set the guideline somewhere in there. How will the minister go about that?” Well, I expect the minister—this is how we got to this stage in the first place—will consult. The minister will consult with landlords and the minister will consult with tenants—individual tenants, individual landlords—to get their idea of what the market conditions are like, both in Toronto and in other parts of Ontario—small-town Ontario, rural Ontario, big-city Ontario. I expect that the minister will consult with tenant umbrella organizations and consult with landlord umbrella organizations. I



expect that the minister will consult with her colleagues here in this chamber and consult with the ministry. And the minister, on a good-faith basis and with a real sense of how the economy is working—what the needs of the tenants are and what the needs of the landlords are—will make that determination.

I speak to this issue because I personally have a great interest in landlord and tenant matters. Before I was elected to this chamber in 2003, I served for three years as the first chair of the Toronto Community Housing Corp. When I was there, we had about 1,500 high-rises and another collection of stand-alone single-family dwellings. In those 1,500 high-rises, we had 62,000 individual units, and in those 62,000 individual units we housed 164,000 tenants. When the Toronto Community Housing Corp. was set up, depending on which entities you look at, it was either the third- or fourth-largest housing authority in North America, after New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. I remember attending our board meetings at the Toronto Community Housing Corp. as chair with our public servants, and it was always a struggle to set a fair rent, particularly with the inhabitants and residents of the Toronto Community Housing Corp.

The thing we found that tenants needed—and it's the same for tenants who are paying market rates in the private sector—is predictability and reasonableness. For most people managing their family budgets, it's very, very difficult to handle from one year to the next, going, as we did in this past year, from less than 1% to more than 3%. If the inflation rate had been 4%, 5% or 6%—imagine waking up one morning and the consumer inflation rate is published and it's 6% or 5% or 7% and suddenly you've got to take that hit in your family budget. What this legislation is designed to do is even that out, as I've said, so that tenants have predictability and reasonableness.

Now, we've consulted, in the process of drafting Bill 19, widely with both tenant and landlord organizations. We've consulted with municipal authorities and municipal politicians who understand the local realities in their communities, whether it's in rural Ontario or small-town Ontario or big-city Ontario, and we've got a sense from those consultations—we've got more than a sense from those consultations—that this regime that we're designing in Bill 19 is, in fact, what's required to even out that possibility of the inflation rate taking a big jump one year and hammering everybody's budget.

I read the business sections in all of the newspapers and some of the principal American newspapers and some of the English newspapers. One of the things that economists, politicians, builders, landlords, tenants, residents are very, very worried about—you're hearing a tremendous amount about this as people are trying to read the tea leaves, trying to fathom what's going to happen in our uncertain economy. When you read the financial press, the theme seems to be this: Nobody is sure whether or how fast our economy is going to recover. There is one theme or one scenario that paints us, over the next

number of years, as having something close to almost a zero inflation rate. There's another scenario that's predicated on increases in oil prices, increases in agricultural products and food stuffs and so on, that says, "No, what people should expect in the next couple of years is a significant jump in the rate of inflation." So under the old regime, tenants are getting up every morning wondering which of those scenarios is going to play out, the sort of zero or 1% or 2% inflation rate or a big jump?

Just look at what has happened to gas prices in the last couple of weeks. I filled up the car yesterday, and I see that the high-test gas was \$1.51, and I think the low-test gas was \$1.36. In the US, gas prices—every night I watch the American news at 6:30 and so on, and I see the big issue down there is the huge jump in gas prices. Now they're worried about the inflation rate that might take a great jump.

The beauty of this legislation is that tenants and, indeed, landlords now know that, regardless of which of those scenarios plays out in our economy—the flat, static inflation rate or the big jump in the inflation rate—everybody, landlords and tenants, is going to be protected. The landlords will get at least 1%. The tenants know that they're never going to have to pay more than 2.5%. Then within that range, the minister will set the guidelines for the rent increase.

I come back to my initial comments that, in these uncertain and troubling economic times, people are worried: "If there's a big jump in the inflation rate, am I going to have enough after-tax income to handle that rent increase and pay for my kids' clothes and pay for my other bills and pay for the high gas prices that I need to get to my job?" That's what this legislation is designed to do: fairness and predictability.

I can tell you that the groups that I've talked to, both on the landlord side and on the tenant side, understand that. They appreciate that. Some have been in to see me at my office and have said, "Mr. Zimmer, I know it's difficult for the government in these trying economic times, but you have brought some fairness and predictability. We appreciate your government's efforts in that regard."

So again, I'm very pleased to stand and speak in favour of this legislation. I would never want to see the day when someone has to worry that next month, when the consumer inflation rate comes out, that it's going to be high and suddenly, overnight, "I've got to come up with a significant chunk of extra money for my rent." Thank you, Speaker.

1720

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Minister of Health on a point of order.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you very much, Speaker. On February 19, I responded to a question from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. The Hansard of the response I provided states, "I can't give the member opposite the assurance that all current residents will be moved to a long-term-care home of their choice"—what I said, Speaker, but what I would like to

correct the record to say is, "I can give the member opposite" assurances. So, an enunciation problem on my part, Speaker; an important difference. It should read, "I can give the member opposite...." Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rental affordability is an important aspect of living in this province, and we must look at both sides with a balanced approach, and it needs to look after the number of units, so that there's no question we want to ensure that the rental rates are kept responsible and reasonable.

We also have to look that the return be such that it encourages new units in the rental market, or we run into some of the problems we've had over the past number of years where there aren't enough rental units. I've heard members on this side of the House talking about the need for more social housing. Part of that is because there's no return for landlords. It's interesting to see the concern with this government over the rent increases when there was very little concern over the other costs that these people are paying.

You know, we look at the cost of energy and what that's done to living in this province. We've seen energy rates spike up 83% since 2003, and 150% if you're lucky enough to have a smart meter. Under the McGuinty government, we look at seeing this increase another 45% over the next five years.

So, while it's important to look at these costs, there are many costs that make life affordable in this province—I would like to think that we should look at them all and that's our role in this government, as well as making sure that we have enough rental units. To say that it's a balanced approach—I think this bill still fails there. We can restrict rents, but if they have no place to live, what have we done? We're only going to force these landlords to sell the units because they're unaffordable to maintain, and of course, that's a way around the rent increase. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** It's interesting that the member who spoke before me talks about there being no returns for landlords, because the information that I kind of got when I did my research was that this 2012 guideline increase came along at a time when the province's renter households have an annual income that on average is half of what the owners of those buildings are. So, when we talk about balance, the renters have had stagnant incomes since 2009, with the recession. I heard the minister talk about balance as well in her lead-in. She talked about the balance for landlords and how it would be unfair to make this bill retroactive because landlords already have their plan in place. However, there's no balance on the other side for people who are stuck at the same minimum wage, who are having their ODSP and Ontario Works frozen, who are only getting half of their child tax benefit. Those parents of those children were counting on

getting \$200 a year more this year. Now they're finding out that they're only getting \$100. What about their plans for the 2012 year, for their expenses?

The other issue that could immediately make a change would be to ensure that those other 50,000 to 60,000 units come under the guidelines and that the ones that have been lost, as tenants leave, come back under the guidelines. I think that would go a long way—the numbers that I've been given by some of the groups—that would bring another 300,000 units across the province under the guidelines.

I would suggest that the government go back and look at those issues and come forward with some bills to assist Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It was a delight to listen to my colleague from Willowdale, who, in his remarks today, certainly demonstrated in this House very clearly that he's very knowledgeable about the housing rental market here in Ontario, but particularly right here in Toronto.

It's interesting. The parliamentary assistant gave me some facts here that are very, very interesting. I did not know that there are 1,312,290 tenant households in the province of Ontario, representing 29% of all the households in Ontario. This includes private rentals, social housing and transitional housing. The number of tenant households affected by the annual rent increase guideline would be approximately one million. Those are very interesting numbers.

When you look over the years since rent control legislation was introduced by the Davis government in 1975—in 1975, the guideline was 8% for a rental increase. That's substantial. In the early 1990s, it was 5.4%; 1991, 6%. It's interesting enough that since 2003—in 2003, it was 2.9%; 2004, 2.9%; 2005, 1.5%; 2006, 2.1%; 2007, 2.6%; 2008, 1.4%; 2009, 1.4%; 2010, 2.11%. It's interesting how it's varied significantly over the last 37 years, after it was originally introduced by the Davis government in 1975.

I also want to remind those individuals who are watching the debate this evening—I know they're all glued to their TV, just enjoying their dinner; it's about 5:30 p.m.—that the legislation does allow—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I too found it interesting to hear my colleague and share his thoughts with regard to this bill. He talked about predictability and reasonableness in uncertain times. He talked a little bit about never wanting to have to worry about the unpredictability of inflation. I would add to that comment interest rates that could spike at any time and really put us in a dire spot.

I would be remiss—and it kind of drew me a parallel to: What if the Liberal government had adopted a similar concern and a similar approach to their spending habit over the last eight years, and a ceiling that would limit it? Then we would not be in the dire situation and the consequences of where we are today.



Conversely, we would have had reasonable rents. We would have had a reasonable supply of affordable housing. We would have an economy that is creating jobs, not losing them. We would have a debt that is manageable and not one that is actually mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren.

Speaker, just think. What could have been accomplished with the \$3 billion wasted by the Liberals on their cancelled Mississauga and Oakville gas plants and the billion-dollar boondoggle? We would have houses for those in need, jobs for the construction trades, hospitals built as opposed to cancelling them and breaking election promises.

Just think what we could do if we did not have to spend \$10 billion just to service our debt load. What happens if that interest rate spikes and it's \$20 billion? Think about the people who can't afford what they need out there today.

My colleague from Stormont-Dundas-South Gengarry, I think, brings a valid point. We need balance. We need to always be thinking about what our actions do and how we can work together to help those less fortunate. We need to always put restraint on our spending and not mortgage our future and live beyond our means. We need to look at things like Bill 19 and make sure there's a balance between those private industries that are trying to make a living and those people who need affordable housing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I now return to the member for Willowdale—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Two minutes to reply.

1730

**Mr. David Zimmer:** All right. Well, thank you very much. I wanted to just take the two minutes to speak about the impact of this on landlords because, of course, we have to be mindful of our landlords. They're the ones who build the buildings and supply the units.

Our proposed legislation on the guideline—of course I've said that—will introduce greater stability for the landlords. We recognize the valuable contribution landlords make to the rental housing market. That's why—you want to keep this in mind—landlords can continue to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board for above-guideline rent increases for the following purposes: extraordinary increases in the cost of municipal taxes and charges in utilities and the like, eligible capital expenditures, and increases in operating costs related to security services.

The Residential Tenancies Act also contains several provisions to promote a healthy investment climate for rental housing. With regard to market rent, when the units are vacant, landlords may negotiate rents with new tenants. Rental units built or first occupied after November 1991 are exempt from the annual rent increase guideline. This is an important one: The interest rate that a landlord must pay on the last month's rent has been lowered from 6% and is now the same as the rent increase guideline, which of course will be based on Ontario's CPI.

Again, coming back to this idea of what our government has tried to do is to strike the right balance, to bring a degree of fairness that is respectful and protective of the rights and the difficulties of tenants paying their rent while, at the same time, preserving the system for our landlords.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Minister of Health on a point of order.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I apologize, but I need to correct my correction. The correct date was the 29th of February. I did say "the 19th."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you for that clarification.

Further debate? The member for Lambton-Kent—

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Sarnia-Lambton.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Sarnia-Lambton. Sorry.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I was just testing you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the kind introduction. I was just testing you there to see if you knew the riding; excellent.

Thanks again for the opportunity to speak to the House today about Bill 19 and the emerging needs of tenants and landlords in Ontario. We know that when it comes to housing in the province of Ontario, whether you come at the issue from the perspective of a landlord, a tenant or a service provider in the municipal sector, the situation is far from perfect. All sides of this issue face serious challenges. Unfortunately, this bill doesn't address the very serious issues that both landlords and tenants are facing across the province.

Ontario, right now, has about 1,300,000 tenant households. Twenty per cent of tenant households spend more than 50% of their income on rent. I believe the general rule of budgeting says that that number should be closer to 30%. So, right now, we know that there are a number of people across this province that are struggling to make ends meet.

Thirty-two per cent of tenants have accommodations that fail to meet standards of adequacy, suitability and affordability. These numbers are up and will continue to rise across this province as this province fails to deal with economic stagnation; the loss of the industrial sector—over 600,000 Ontario men and women out of work; skyrocketing energy prices; significant increases to user fees, like those included in last week's budget; and increased taxes to pay for this government's overspending and mismanagement, yet this bill, Bill 19, does nothing to deal with those core issues that are making life so unaffordable in Ontario.

My riding of Sarnia-Lambton is not immune to those issues, like the lack of job creation. Right now, the unemployment rate in Sarnia-Lambton, according to the workforce development board, is sitting at 11.1% in my riding. People can't afford the cost of living because they are struggling to find those basic work opportunities.

Things will continue to get worse under this government. In the last year alone in my riding, we have lost over 100 direct jobs at Lambton generating station, 80 at the Sarnia jail and over 260 at Hiawatha Horse Park

because of the ill-informed and misdirected decisions of this government.

In addition, on March 30, NCO Customer Management Ltd. shut its doors in Sarnia, leaving another 500 people out-of-work in my riding. We still don't know what the final job loss numbers in Sarnia-Lambton will be once the revenue-generating slots-at-racetracks program is finally scrapped—another misdirection by this government.

I'd like to point out an article by Jim Coyle that appeared in the Toronto Star on Saturday. It describes what will likely happen in rural communities like mine across this province with a stake in the horse racing industry, such as Sarnia-Lambton. Mr. Coyle wrote, "In the paddock at Mohawk," and in Sarnia-Lambton, "veterinarians, owners, breeders, trainers, drivers, grooms—all engaged in the palpable labour of love that is the horse industry—say the province doesn't seem to have a clue how far its decision will ripple through the economy."

"I can't think of anything in the rural areas that it won't have an effect on," says Bill O'Donnell of the Ontario Horse Racing Industry Association.

"The chain-reaction goes something like this:

"Without the purse money supported by the slot-in-racetracks program, it will become economically unfeasible to breed, raise and train horses to race.

"And the loss, in a business that supports about 60,000 jobs, ripples out in ways paddock denizens don't think the government has recognized.

"It will hit vehicle manufacturers whose trucks and trailers fill the Mohawk" and Hiawatha and many other tracks. "It will hit feed dealers and the farmers who make ends meet selling hay and straw to horse owners. It will hit small-town tack shops, blacksmiths and hardware stores. It will hit barn builders and even the rubber manufacturer who provides the large mats that cushion the floors of stalls....

"Dr. John Hennessey has a farm ... and a mobile veterinary practice. He travels with a \$100,000"—

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Yes, I thought we were debating a bill on housing. I haven't heard anything about housing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you to the member for Guelph. We are indeed debating a housing bill, Bill 19. I will return to the member for Sarnia-Lambton and ask him to confine his remarks to the bill at hand.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's such a thin bill, Mr. Speaker. There's such thin gruel in this bill, I couldn't even find anything to talk about. But the point I'm trying to make is that there's a lot of people in this province who are going to be out of income and won't be able to pay their rent. This government should have taken that into account before they made that misinformed, ill-informed malfeasance on this job with this cancelling the slots at racetracks.

But anyway, I'll get back to this bill. This is an excellent example of significant impacts that the misguided agenda of this government is having on rural communities in Ontario. Because of that agenda, we'll continue to raise the cost of living in Ontario.

In Sarnia-Lambton, as well as many other communities like Guelph and other communities across this province, we are dealing with some pretty alarming numbers. According to the latest statistics provided by the United Way, in my riding there are over 500 families on the waiting list for affordable housing in my community. I hope this will satisfy the government members that we're talking about the bill. It was getting there. Sometimes it takes a little longer.

In 2009, the United Way of Sarnia-Lambton reports that over 700 families in Sarnia-Lambton required additional assistance from a program that in my riding is known as the rent bank, in order to meet their monthly housing expenses. In the same year, 266 people, including children, were housed in emergency shelters in Sarnia-Lambton because they did not have the means or access to affordable housing in their community.

It should also be noted that the rent bank program in Sarnia-Lambton only has the capacity to help an individual or a family once every 24 months. That means that in addition to the 700 families that received assistance, there are hundreds that are not eligible each year.

These numbers are shocking, but just a small example of what is going on in many communities across Ontario. That's why I'm wondering about the need for Bill 19 at this time. It isn't going to do anything to help those people in Sarnia-Lambton to get that safe, secure, affordable place to raise their family. Facing the mounting demand for geared-to-income housing in my community, local leaders in this community are taking the kind of actions that Bill 19 could have included, but are nowhere to be found in the bill.

I want to read an excerpt from a recent article by Paul Morden of the Sarnia Observer, if the government members will allow me, describing what our local leaders in Sarnia-Lambton are doing to address the dramatic need for new housing solutions in our community, something that the government members could take back to the cabinet table:

"Lambton county could begin taking applications in February for the 57-apartment affordable housing building under construction on Maxwell Street.

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"A standing committee of county council is recommending it adopt a Lambton housing services department plan to fill the 50 seniors apartments, and seven for the disabled." This \$10-million project is "located on the former Marshall Gowland Manor site.

"The contractor expects to have the building finished in August, said Lola Dudley, the county's housing services manager.

"We're hoping by the end of October to have it fully rented."



"The plan, going to county council February 2, would set rents, including hydro, at \$530 for one-bedroom apartments and \$629 for two bedrooms.

"The committee also backed a call to use an existing county subsidy program to ensure none of the building's tenants spend more than 30% of their income on rent.

"A report from housing services notes" over "100 households are already on a mailing list of people interested in becoming tenants.

"But the plan would initially target 16 of the seniors units at current tenants of county rent-geared-to-income apartments.

"That would free up those units for non-seniors who have been on the list for some time'...."

Unfortunately Bill 19 does nothing to create affordable housing in situations like Sarnia-Lambton's. It does nothing to assist local municipalities in coping with the mounting costs of operating their existing stock of affordable housing.

The mayor of Sarnia, Mayor Mike Bradley, one that I'm sure the government knows well, has commented that the condition of the more than 1,100 rent-geared-to-income units the county owns in Sarnia-Lambton is troubling. Many buildings are plagued by ongoing maintenance issues. It's estimated that across Ontario there is a \$3-billion repair backlog because this government has failed for nine years and hasn't made those needed investments.

Mr. Speaker, landlords are facing huge expenses to maintain or bring the vast number of rental units that came online during the 1960s and 1970s and have become substandard or even dangerous to live in. Some of the other members spoke earlier about that. Bill 19 will not assist in any of that. Bill 19 will not assist in opening up any new rental units or encouraging landlords grappling with the crippling effect of the HST and the skyrocketing hydro and heating costs, implemented by this government, to stay in the business of renting out residential units.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, being a landlord is a money-losing position. Costs of operating the units continue to rise up to 6% per year. Despite that, the average rate increase in Ontario was 2.1%, and over the past five the average increase was 1.7%. Over the last five and 10 years, those increases have fallen between the floor and ceiling that is proposed in Bill 19. So what is the point of this bill?

Mr. Speaker, rent increases are already pegged to the Ontario consumer price index, which gives us a broad understanding of the price of common goods and our spending power from year to year. Why the minister would create a bill that meddles with that system is somewhat puzzling and only highlights the limits of this particular act.

But it is not just my caucus colleagues who are questioning the need for Bill 19, Mr. Speaker. Tenant groups in Ontario can see how empty a vessel this bill is as well. My colleague from Leeds-Grenville introduced these comments when he spoke about Bill 19 last week. I think they need repeating.

Kenn Hale from the Advocacy Centre for Tenants said, "Why is the government doing so little to protect the homes of hundreds of thousands of tenants after promising so much more?" He goes on to say, "In the real world, tenants are losing their jobs, facing demands for wage freezes and rollbacks or living with a 1% increase in their social assistance cheques."

I can update this and say that the Minister of Finance has decided to freeze social assistance rates in his 2012 budget. For example, people collecting disability income must continue to make do with \$12,000 a year, make it stretch to meet the rising price of energy that has been brought in by the ill-thought-out Green Energy Act and smart meters—if I can say that. So there's no relief for individuals here either, Mr. Speaker.

The last line—"the 300,000 tenant households that live in buildings that are exempt from rent regulation, and we hope the minister amends the bill to provide them" some protection as well

Once again, Mr. Speaker, this bill is lacking substance. It should be noted that Bill 19 provides no protections for rising rents at vacant residential units; residential units first occupied on or after November 1, 1991; social housing units; or nursing homes. From the perspective of a landlord, a tenant or a service provider in the municipal sector, the situation is far from perfect. All sides of this issue face serious problems.

Again, I will repeat some of the comments that were made by the President and CEO of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario. He said, in reaction to the bill—this is Mr. Brescia—"We understand the government's efforts to mitigate price volatility, but setting an arbitrary price ceiling fails to recognize that housing industry costs, like repairs and maintenance, are not subject to any price caps.... The government is unilaterally imposing a cap without any discussion with an entire industry and is initiating a policy that will be particularly devastating for small landlords."

Mr. Speaker, just like when the HST was introduced, the message that this government is sending to landlords, in order to look good to the tenants in the minister's own riding, is that they need to continue to absorb the increased costs of goods and services in their properties. Covering these extra costs, imposed by this government, further negates any amount of positive cash flow that these rental units might have once generated for these owners. Unfortunately, this government forgets that most of these rental units are owned by average Ontarians who have scraped together a little extra money from their savings to pay for a second property or possibly add an apartment unit to their home. Most of these people are simply operating these rental units with the hope of a modest return on a small investment to help them pay off their mortgage or save for retirement.

The impact of the HST alone being introduced left rental housing providers no choice but to use funds from their reserve funds in order to make up this cost difference. Reserve funds are not intended to cover that sort of expense; it is important that they are used for

unexpected repairs and maintenance that keeps units and buildings in good shape.

According to the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, the HST added an additional 5% charge to landlords and inflation has added 2%, leaving landlords with an additional 7% charge. Unfortunately, under this government these sorts of wild increases, associated with the cost of living, are not uncommon and are having the effect of making owning rental properties less and less desirable.

If rental properties go off-line in our province, there will be dramatic economic and social repercussions across Ontario. One of the key messages I think that comes out of this bill, as our critic implied, is that this bill is one of the results of the HST, which added additional costs to several services that landlords are required to provide, including snow removal, landscaping and many home improvement services and, in many cases, hydro and electrical costs. Our party, the PC Party, repeatedly warned the government of Ontario of the risk of Ontario's rental housing stock deteriorating with the additional cost of the HST, on top of the risk that the small landlords might get out of the business altogether. The McGuinty Liberals ignored these warnings and originally told landlords to "absorb the cost of the HST."

I was at a meeting one day, Mr. Speaker—I followed the Minister of Revenue at that time—and there were real estate brokers, which makes me think about it. I said, "What did the minister say?" They said, "He told us to get ready to absorb the HST in our commission." So they weren't very happy. It made me think of that.

The McGuinty government has left landlords with no other option than to raise rents and has left tenants to pay the additional costs of their HST.

I will not be supporting Bill 19, primarily because this bill will have very little impact—I thought I should make that clear, maybe, before the end of my remarks—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** We were worried, Bob.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** You knew where I was going, did you?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I did.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** The member from Peterborough said he knew where I was going.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting Bill 19, primarily because this bill will have very little impact in actually protecting residents from rising rents and the increasingly unaffordable environment that has been created by this government in Ontario.

The Progressive Conservative caucus, led by Tim Hudak, has repeatedly warned the government of the risk of Ontario's rental housing stock deteriorating with the additional costs of the HST, on top of the risk that the small landlords might get out of the business altogether. The impact of energy increases, all of these costs that landlords have tried to absorb—tenants are being wedged in the middle there.

This act is more about the minister appearing to be on the side of the tenants in her riding in order to try to gain some type of support. There are clearly more substantive

changes to the Residential Tenancies Act that could have been made to truly improve the situation in my riding of Sarnia-Lambton and across all of the ridings in the southwest and across Ontario as a whole, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I will not be supporting this bill. Thank you for the time in the Legislature today.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to follow the member for Sarnia-Lambton. I've heard a couple of times this evening, throughout the context of this debate, the three little letters: HST. I've heard it mainly from this side of the House. It really always makes my ears perk up, Mr. Speaker, because I tend to wonder at the battle, the inner struggle with your conscience, those members across the way have when we talk about the HST as a measure in this province and as it was imposed. We know that their parliamentary cousins were the ones that actually imposed it upon this province, in cahoots, as a technical term, with the government of the day.

It's one that New Democrats—and I'll raise the point again, as I did in my earlier statement—sounded the alarm on every street corner, at every turn, about how it was going to affect people. Here we are today talking about how it will affect landlords and tenants and how it has affected landlords and tenants.

I stand here today, Mr. Speaker, proudly announcing and indicating to this House that New Democrats are prepared to alleviate that burden and have introduced measures to take the harmonized sales tax that was imposed by the federal government, in coordination with the provincial government, off of not only home heating costs but eventually hydro rates once the 10% break that the province quickly enacted to cover their trail is removed. We understand that that will give people the affordability that they need, and it's something that I hope this House adopts at some point in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'd like to begin by thanking all of the speakers today who have been speaking to this very important bill.

Speaker, I believe that actions speak louder than words. I've been hearing the members opposite talk and criticize this bill, so I just wanted to take a few minutes to take a look at their record as to what they did when it came to affordable housing.

I'll start with the PCs because it's much easier. If you were to look at the eight years that they were governing, you would be hard-pressed to find them use the words "affordable housing" even once during the Legislature. That is their record on affordable housing: They never even uttered those words for eight years.

As for the NDP, one might think that the NDP might have been more sympathetic to the cause of making housing more affordable, so I looked at their record. It turns out that in 1992, rents went up by 6%, while inflation was only 1%. In 1993, rents went up by 4.9%



under the NDP, and inflation was 1.8%. In 1994, rents went up by 3.2%, and inflation was 0%, Speaker. That is their record.

As a Liberal, I stand here very, very proud of our record when it comes to affordable housing. We've done a lot, and this bill is a great, great step in the right direction by limiting the maximum that the landlord can charge a tenant at a 2.5% rent increase. Not only that, we've done a lot to increase the stock of affordable housing. There is always more stock to be built; I will not disagree with that.

But one thing that we've done which is very practical and doesn't cost the taxpayer anything is that the province has amended the Planning Act to require that municipalities authorize in their official plans and zoning bylaws to make it legal for second units or basement apartments. There's no better way to increase the stock of affordable legal housing than this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** It's interesting to hear the members opposite talk about affordability. It seems to me something the honourable member from Bruce-Grey talked about. It comes to balance. If you're truly interested in the cost of living in this province, you have to look at all aspects. We talked about hydro, we talked about the HST. These are things they brought in that made huge increases, much more than any of these rent increases. We have people who now can't find a place to live in this province because we've driven up costs for landlords. It's all a balance issue.

It's interesting to note the waste of money we've had in this province. That has been well documented, but I think the other side is not listening sometimes—billions of dollars wasted just in hydro alone and the plants they're building. Seat savers comes up during the election and then they're cancelled. We're seeing lawsuits coming against the government now. These are more losses that the consumer has to pay for. It all adds up.

You have to look at a balanced approach to this. We're looking at affordability right across, whether it be in food supplies—the price of fuel is going up much more than 2.5%. We're looking at people maybe being able to afford the rent but not being able to turn on the lights, not being able to do the laundry, not being able to buy their food.

You have to look at the big picture here, and I think with this province we've failed to see that over the last eight years under the McGuinty government, and we're paying dearly for it now. We're seeing life here—people without housing increasing exponentially. We have to do something soon if we're going to see this problem fixed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I just want to read a direct quote from an article on December 5, 2011, in the news editors, and hopefully I can squeeze it in in the two minutes.

"During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to keep rent increase guidelines 'in line with what is happening in the real world for those who rent.'"

"In the real world, tenants are losing their jobs, facing demands for wage freezes and rollbacks or living with a 1% increase in their social assistance cheques. In the real world, when tenants move there is no limit on the rent increases that a landlord can charge an incoming tenant in any private-market building," added Hale. "All tenants deserve to be protected from unaffordable rent increases, including 300,000 tenant households that live in buildings that are exempt from rent regulation, and we hope the minister amends the bill to provide them with this protection."

I just wanted to say that, even though this bill is doing a small part in trying to soften the blow for the affordability that tenants face, there is a lot more to be done. A lot of people are suffering beyond that small gesture of the 1% to 2.5% controlling that inflation on rent.

I personally know someone who was looking in my riding for a unit. She looked around for quite some time and was really disappointed and disgusted with the conditions of a unit that she was going to rent for \$1,000 a month. She said she just couldn't believe the type of rent that you had to pay for the type of unit you were going to be charged for.

So, we still have a lot more to do when it comes to affordability and the conditions of apartment units.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'll return to the member for Sarnia-Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Did you want me to stick to the bill? Anyway, I'd like to thank the member from Essex, the member from Mississauga East-Cooksville, the member for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry—stone, dust and gravel—and the member for London-Fanshawe, obviously, for their remarks, especially the member for London-Fanshawe for bringing up those remarks from during the election campaign. Obviously a lot of things are said then that—you know the old story: When all's said and done, there's a lot more said than done. This bill would probably be a good example of that.

As I said, one of the results of this bill—the HST, the price of energy in this province, all these things have done a great deal to jeopardize many people in being able to afford housing. We always said that one of the biggest problems in this province, the threat to health care and education in this province, is the McGuinty government's overspending. That's what threatened them: large deficits and debt. That's what's going to threaten health and social programs in this province, and affordable housing as well.

**Interjection:** And the horses.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** And the horses—all those 60,000 jobs in this province, right in the backyard of Guelph, for the member from Guelph. The veterinary school—there will be a number of students who probably won't be placed this year. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, all those things

go into making an economy that can afford to pay rent—affordable housing.

We think this bill, like I say, is too little too late. It doesn't go far enough. We in this caucus won't be supporting it, because we think it is more about trying to let the minister herself win some points back home in her riding.

It won't do anything. You've heard from the tenant groups, you've heard from the landlords, you've heard from the opposition. I'm sure the government members

have heard from their voters, their constituents, as well. I'm sure, if they were maybe more forthright with us, that we'd probably know they're not happy either.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*



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Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 3 April 2012

Mardi 3 avril 2012



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 29, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm pleased to resume the debate, the discussions that we started last week on Thursday. Time ran out before question period.

I do want to inform, or re-inform, the House and give a synopsis of what I had talked about during that debate. Certainly, I was looking at the case of bullying, trying to talk about it from a perspective of an academic debate—what is violence? What is bullying?—and going over some of the past legislation that even our party enacted on this cause, because I think that we are here to talk about protecting our kids. I think if we keep our kids as the focal point in this, we are in essence doing our jobs: That's protecting kids from harm.

I have about nine minutes left in this debate, and I do want to reiterate the fact that, as much as possible, I'm trying to rise above some of the politics that I think we're expecting to hear in this debate, and I think that that's an important thing to do. I think we can talk about bullying without talking about some of the heated issues that surround this particular bill. I'm hopeful that debate on both sides of the House can respect that.

I do want to talk a little bit about some of the meetings that I've had over the last little while that frankly have been humbling. I met with Roger Lawler, who is the chair of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board. When I met him I asked him about his views on Bill 13, as I would in any circumstance where we're meeting a key stakeholder in our community, to get some feedback on the kinds of bills that we are talking about. Madam Speaker, like I said, his response was pretty humbling.

When talking about bullying in their schools in that school board, the chair, Roger Lawler, suggested that they're not focused on the politics of this issue; they're focused on the act. They're focused on the deed. They're focused on the fact that there is a bully and a person who is bullied.

So the school board actively seeks to address some of those concerns that they see therein, specifically, talking about the policies. Whether that person has been bullied because of race or religiosity or sexual orientation or whatever the case, that student is being treated and counselled accordingly. I found it very humbling that he did not seek an opportunity to engage in a highly political and sometimes even partisan answer in response to that.

I also met with another principal in the Waterloo Region District School Board who talked about what was already happening in his school. This is from Helmut Tinnes, who is the principal of Mary Johnstson Public School, again in Waterloo region. He talked about two programs that they offered for bullies in their schools and in that school in particular. The first was called the Roots of Empathy program. The Roots of Empathy program is a unique Canadian program started in 1996. This program has shown significant progress, according to Mr. Tinnes, in reducing aggression among children while raising social emotional competence and increasing empathy. So we have a program, like the Roots Of Empathy, that essentially addresses the key concern that we see with respect to bullying.

Mr. Tinnes also talked about a second program, which is called the social skills development and bullying awareness workshops, which are hosted in our region by the John Howard Society. In this program a representative from the John Howard Society comes to talk to children about the issue of bullying, so we're raising awareness of what's happening. This is another workshop for parents, and how children and parents can recognize bullying and work with schools to combat bullying.

These are the things that are already happening in our schools. I suggest that we need an opportunity to have a bill before us that essentially amplifies what's already going on in our schools, so we need a bill that complements their efforts.

I want to talk a little bit about what happened at my son's school last week and during the course of the year—at Ayr Public School, where my son is in JK. They have monthly assemblies that actually address the concerns of bullying. What they're doing each month in these assemblies is they're talking about some of the



characteristics that we'd hope we could see and teach our kids to talk about. Really, we need one person in a group to stand up for the person being bullied. If we can find that one person to stand up to that bully, then a lot of the issues surrounding it can be mitigated. We won't see some of the negative effects, emotional and physical, that we would typically see.

So it was the JK room last week that actually had to do the assembly and did a skit. They were doing a skit on building character, building confidence in themselves. At the end of that assembly they sang a very important song. That song was *The More We Get Together, the Happier We'll Be*. I think a lot of us who have children or can remember back to when we were children and actually remember it—

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Can we sing it?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The member for Guelph actually wants me to sing, I think. I'm not sure you really want me to sing.

I'm encouraged by the fact, though, that they'd like to sing *The More We Get Together, The Happier We'll Be*. I'm certainly hopeful that that synopsis is something that we see more and more in this House, in this place.

Madam Speaker, my wife is a psychologist in Waterloo region. She is a child psychologist. She talks and deals with issues of anxiety and depression. She often engages in therapy sessions with clients who have been bullied. It's certainly a very prevalent thing in our schools. The emotional effects that it has on people, I think, are incomprehensible if we have not ourselves been the bullied child. I think this is an issue that seriously deserves our attention and due consideration.

One of the things that are becoming more prevalent with respect to bullying in our schools is this issue of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is certainly something that I think we read about. It's in the public discourse. I don't think we know a lot about it, particularly about the effects that it has on kids, because cyberbullying effectively is the extent to which we use the Internet and social media to engage in some of the types of bullying that I expressed last week, including, for example, the direct verbal attack—which we could talk about—writing a letter, an email, sending a text message, posting something on a blog. We can also talk about how the Internet's being used to spread false rumours about kids.

Cyberbullying has a very important effect, I think, in our school system. It's one of the reasons why I have been a very strong defender of Bill 14, the member for Kitchener-Waterloo's bill, because it actually addresses cyberbullying in very great detail. It's a very important aspect of it, it's a newer aspect of it, and it certainly affects students throughout all the categories of being bullied.

Madam Speaker, I think cyberbullying is something that we need to address more concretely. Cyberbullying is one of those things that we read about a lot. As politicians, we might have been negatively affected by some cyberbullying ourselves, when things are sent by email or by text or are posted on a website that may or may not be

true about some person, with the explicit perspective of trying to embarrass, humiliate and otherwise demean political figures.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I think it's important that we address that in a very specific way. I know the member for Peterborough doesn't want me to talk about cyberbullying, but that's okay. I think it's something that deserves a lot of merit.

I also know that we are looking here to come up with reasonable compromises when it comes to legislation. We're looking for reasonable compromises when it comes to some of the debates that we're seeing in this House, particularly with respect to Ornge and the effect that Ornge is having on our political process. We want answers to Ornge. We're not getting those answers to Ornge, and for that reason, Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of this debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Mr. Leone has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 0914 to 0944.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask all members to take their seats.

Mr. Leone has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour, please rise until counted.

All those opposed, please rise and be counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 19; the nays are 42.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

We will revert back to questions and comments.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I just wanted to share with you an article, actually, that was in a local paper from a young man who lives in my riding. His name is Jordan Setacci. He started to experience bullying when he moved from contact sports, like hockey, to dancing. He went on in his life—he's 25 years old—to pursue a career in dancing. He has danced with stars such as Lady Gaga. He has been in a number of movies, dancing, and he has recently, in the last couple of years, actually opened his own dance studio in St. Catharines.

He was out at a school in Port Colborne, which is in my riding, spreading the anti-bullying message. His remarks were, "Spread the message. Tell somebody about it if you're bullied. If you're observing bullying, tell somebody about it. Perhaps approach the bully and ask them not to do that, but don't just ignore it, because when you ignore it, it doesn't go away."

He knew that when he actually moved from hockey to dancing that he was perhaps going to be bullied, but he kind of took the plunge and he has made a very successful career for himself. He said when he was younger there was nobody around to talk to about bullying, so he encourages students to go to their teacher, go to their

guidance counsellor, go to their parent, go to somebody they trust. Until people actually start to talk about this issue and share the concerns that they have in their school or in the playground, nothing is going to happen to stop this from continuing. I thought that you'd be interested in the article, and I'm happy to speak on this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise to speak in support of Bill 13. I was very disappointed my colleague opposite tried to stop this discussion when it's so important to debate, because this is what this Legislature is about: to give every one of us an opportunity to speak in support of or against a proposed legislation, Madam Speaker.

He made references to Roots of Empathy. Let me tell you what Roots of Empathy is. It started in the city of Toronto when I was a former school board trustee, Madam Speaker. If Mary Gordon found out the opposition member used her program, which is recognized internationally, she would be disappointed; I can tell you first-hand.

I know first-hand why we need Bill 13, Madam Speaker, when I hear the pain and the suffering of our young students, okay? In the Toronto Star today, it talks about the higher suicide rate amongst young people, and that's what this bill is all about. This bill will bring tougher consequences for bullying and hate-related activities, and also require all the school boards to support students who want to lead activities to promote understanding and respect. Sometimes we need to provide opportunity and space to allow young people to talk, to share and learn and support each other.

So why wouldn't this bill be supported by our colleague? I just don't understand, Madam Speaker. But given the challenge, I guess they need to hear from all of us.

But the other thing about this particular bill is the fact that it will raise awareness through the Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in legislation, to encourage discussion, encourage activities. But most importantly, it tells the community that it is okay to be different, it is okay to be unique. Most importantly, it's about protecting and supporting our students in all our schools, making our schools safe, Madam Speaker.

0950

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I appreciate the remarks made earlier this morning by the member from Cambridge, who spent some time dealing specifically with the bill.

Now, he did adjourn the debate, and I think it's important to put on the record why he adjourned the debate—but he did use all of his time with the exception of about one minute. He was trying to make the point that the Minister of Health has failed to deal with—I'd say the Premier has failed to deal with the Ornge helicopter issue adequately. We've been calling with our leader, Tim Hudak, for a select committee or for the minister to resign or some action to at least be apologetic.

This is another case where the government is simply bullying the opposition in terms of not showing any remorse or regrets in the wasteful spending and lack of governance in Ornge. So that's one example. That's why we're still, at this point in time—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I could use this opportunity to adjourn the debate as well, but I won't.

What I will say is this: Last week, last Thursday, our member Elizabeth Witmer introduced Bill 14, and we debated it. It was debated on, and I think it's a very civil response, putting Bills 13 and 14 together. Bill 14, even the media has suggested, is a much more mature and well-developed bill. I'm going to outline, for those members here—when this Bill 13 goes to committee, we should be responding to some of the discussions we heard during that debate. There's a much clearer definition of bullying itself, which is fundamental to a bill, all of us agree.

Any form of bullying is reprehensible, unacceptable in society. All forms of bullying should be expunged from our system. There's early intervention and incorporation in curriculum; there's a provincial-wide ministry model of prevention; the development of a detailed school—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** First, I want to congratulate the member from Cambridge on his thoughts on bullying today. One thing he made a comment on was about how this is a heated issue, and the more I'm in the House listening to the debates on Bill 13, the more it comes to light that this is a heated issue. That's the very reason why we have to stay respectful and calm and deal with this: so that in the end, it will come out the best possible way to help our children be in a safe school and not experience any bullying in any form.

He also talked about the song *The More We Get Together, The Happier We'll Be*. When he said that, everybody had kind of a smile on their face, and the mood was a little easier—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** It won't last.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Yeah, it won't last.

That song—obviously, those words mean something, and that's part of what Bill 13 is about: the power of words. If we can try to remember that the more we get along, the better things will be, the better this bill will be, and the more we're going to accomplish in this House for the betterment of our children, I think we're going to be in a far better place.

I also listened to a comment today after bells were called. Someone said, "Why can't we get along?" It was a member who said that on the other side of me, and then they got up and left. I thought about that. I thought, "Just because we don't agree doesn't mean we can't get along." Let's debate this bill and hear everybody's side. We don't have to agree on everything, but we certainly have to do the right thing and listen to each other and come up with the best bill for our children.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Cambridge has two minutes to respond.



**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'd like to thank the member for Welland, the member for Scarborough—Agincourt, the member for Durham and the member for London—Fanshawe for their thoughtful comments and contributions to this debate.

I want to say very, very specifically that I hope the other side was actually listening to the comments that I made in this debate. Before I moved adjournment, I talked about how my son, who's in JK, had an assembly last week. It was an anti-bullying assembly, and it was an anti-bullying assembly to engender a sense of good character in our kids. The theme was co-operation, and they would have co-operation thoughts. The member from London—Fanshawe did remark on how friendly this place got when I mentioned the song *The More We Get Together*.

I'm talking about co-operation. We're talking about co-operation in trying to merge Bill 13 with Bill 14. But we're also talking about co-operation with respect to getting these select committees on Ornge up and running, which is something the opposition has requested for weeks, and we're not getting the co-operation from across the aisle, co-operation that they've actually said—on record, in Hansard, they actually said, "We will agree with the will of the House, and if it's the will of the House to set up those select committees, we're going to set up those select committees." We still, here on April 3, do not have select committees in this Legislature. It's the reason why we moved adjournment of this House, and we're going to continue moving adjournment of the debate. We're going to continue moving it so long as we don't get the co-operation that we deserve on this side of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We'd like the debate to continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'm happy to stand here today on Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act. We know that bullying in our schools is causing too many of our children to take drastic actions, with the worst kinds of consequences. I am grateful that there is a true recognition and concern on this issue from all parties in this House.

On this issue, we must stand together to keep our children safe, to prevent teen suicide and to ensure that our schools have the tools and resources necessary to combat bullying of our youth. I'm happy to see that we have not one bill but two bills to debate on this issue, and I'm very keen to see these bills debated in detail in committee.

They say that life is in the details. That could not be truer than it is here today, especially when it comes to

how we support our children. We know that our children deserve the very best from our education system. From all of us here, we have the opportunity to show them that through our work on this bill, it can be done. We need to ensure that the children of our province know we understand and support their right to a system of education that is free from bullying and harassment. Every student has a right to a learning environment that is safe, secure and free from intimidation, and we fully support effective action to ensure the safety of every student in the province of Ontario.

I also want to thank everyone involved with the creating of these bills, those who crafted them and those who have worked so hard to ensure this issue has been brought to the forefront, to the attention of those of us who need to take the action our students can't take themselves, by shaping this legislation.

These bills aim to create safer and more accepting schools by designing bullying awareness and prevention weeks; requiring school boards to support student activities that promote equality; requiring groups using school property to abide by a code of conduct; and also requiring action for hate-motivated actions.

Effective bullying prevention requires a comprehensive approach that includes a clear and consistent language, consequences and raising awareness in class and within the community. We also need adequately resourced student supports along with meaningful student, parent and community engagement. There are many groups doing amazing work for our children, and we need to coordinate with those groups and listen to what they are telling us. Groups like Egale, Ontario GSAs, Canadian Auto Workers, CUPE Ontario, Canadian AIDS Society, PFLAG, Metropolitan Community Church of Ontario, and Catholics for Choice have all come together to address and support our children, and now it is our time.

Egale Canada has done amazing work for our teens, and we need to pay attention to their calls for real changes to our school systems and how we can improve the outcomes of those who are being bullied.

#### 1000

According to Every Class in Every School, Egale's final report on homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in Canadian schools, 68% of transgender students, 55% of female sexual minority students and 42% of male sexual minority students reported being verbally harassed about their perceived gender or sexual orientation. Twenty percent of LGBTQ students and almost 10% of non-LGBTQ students reported being physically harassed or assaulted about their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Almost two thirds—64%—of LGBTQ students and 61% of students with LGBTQ parents reported that they feel unsafe at school.

These numbers are very shocking, or at least they are to me. I hope everyone pays very close attention to these numbers. These numbers represent real pain and fear our children experience when they go to school every day.

The worst part of it all is that these statistics are not the worst part of it. According to Teen Health, suicide

rates differ between boys and girls. Girls think of and attempt suicide about twice as often as boys and tend to attempt suicide by overdosing on drugs or cutting themselves. Yet boys die by suicide about four times as often as girls, perhaps because they tend to use more lethal methods such as firearms, hanging or jumping from heights.

There are some people who believe that bullying is only prevalent among our children struggling with sexuality or gender, but we know that is not the case. Racialized and special-needs children in this province are also suffering through real issues of bullying and harassment. These statistics are staggering and I am overwhelmed by the level of violence that our children are faced with every day. That is why I ask each of us here today to forgo our partisan ways and find a way to work together on this important bill. I urge everyone here to consider the consequences of finishing this legislative session without having real supports for students in place. The risk is too great and the price is too high to pay. We can't afford to lose one more child to this behaviour while we stand idly by and engage in a status quo governance. I understand that we are faced with different approaches. I understand that these bills may not be ideal. I also know that without prompt action of everyone here in this Legislature, we are risking another child. In light of that, I want to move this conversation towards how we can best support this bill and the goals it is trying to achieve.

Bill 13 ramps up the consequences for bullying but falls short in its support of student-led equality and awareness activities, including gay-straight alliances. I also know that this bill could do more to address the other factors at play when we consider school safety. There is little mention of access to professional supports, treatments and alternative programming for at-risk or special-needs students. We need to include and consider inadequate staffing and funding for anti-bullying programs, the growing inequities between schools, and the lack of social-skill-building opportunities in a curriculum that has become increasingly focused on narrow EQAO results.

My concerns for this bill are based upon the lack of resources and supports while calling for more punitive measures. Many experts caution that we must go beyond discipline; we need to restore hope through programs and initiatives that create prospects for success. This bill also does not attempt to address the inadequate staffing and supports for students who are the victims of bullying.

People for Education have sent along data that outlines several important ideas for us to include in our deliberations. One of the key factors they note is the roles of principals and how they have changed and have been expanded by numerous government directives, yet fewer and fewer schools in this province have a principal. Special-needs children, one out of three in the GTA alone in our elementary schools, are not getting recommended levels of support they require. More and more schools rely on fundraising for adequate playgrounds and school

supports, which we know are critical to keeping children healthy and active by teaching them important life lessons.

So, Speaker, there are many things that we can certainly discuss and improve upon in this bill. Bill 14 has some valid points as well. Ultimately, I'd like to see all of us work together and take the best of both bills to come out with something that's going to work for the children of our schools and the children in our lives.

I want to wrap up by telling a little story that I experienced when we were in public school. I had a friend of mine, and she was a lovely girl. I pretty much got along with everybody. I got along with the so-called bullies and I got along with the kids who were unfortunately being bullied. I befriended both parties, both people—and I hope to befriend both parties on this side of the House. But all kidding aside, my girlfriend—this girl was a lovely person, and for some reason, they'd zero in on her. To this day, I still communicate with her, and she holds on to those memories of the verbal torment and self-esteem issues. But there's a success story with her. She went on and is very successful in her own business, and she's very proud of her three children.

But I think what we have to look at, too, is that when children are bullied, a lot of people carry on that baggage, and it's not something that they get over easily. Some people rise above it, become tougher and don't let it affect them, but there are those where it does continue on into adulthood. So I do want to just mention her—her fight and her plight that she made—and just tell her that my thoughts are with her.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to follow up on the remarks from the member for London—Fanshawe. I think, in the short time that she's been here, she brings the right attitude to the job. I think, seriously, that the remarks she just made really, really mirror that attitude, and I thank her for it.

Often, you take a bill that comes before the House, and it's very abstract. But often in our daily life, things happen that make it real. Our constituency office, about two years ago, received a phone call from a parent who was at the emergency room of Oakville-Trafalgar hospital, who said, "I'm sitting here with my son. He tried to kill himself last night because he just couldn't put up with the teasing any more," because he had come out and declared to the world that he was a gay person. When you get that phone call and you're talking to the parent, all of a sudden all the bills and the initiatives and everything else don't really become that important. What you want to do is something for that individual at that time.

We have a group in Oakville called the Oakville Provincial Youth Advisory Committee. What it is is two students from each high school. I've always said, if you want to know what's happening in the schools, don't talk to the teachers, don't talk to the parents, go and talk to the kids. That's what we're able to do on a monthly basis



in Oakville, to actually hear from the students themselves.

They decided as a group that they were going to produce a video. We were fortunate enough to have in the group that year two young men who were just terrific filmmakers. In fact, since that time, they've been accepted at the Ryerson school of film. They came up with the video themselves—and this was before any initiatives came out of Queen's Park—and that video now is being used, I understand, by the Red Cross.

It gives us hope that the students are really leading the way on this. They're looking to Queen's Park and they're looking to us as legislators to treat this issue very, very seriously and to pass some legislation that's going to make their stay in school, for themselves and their colleagues, the sort of stay that we want them to have, free from the violence, the bullying and the harassment that lead to the sort of phone calls that I get and you've probably gotten from emergency—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Dufferin—Caledon.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I'm pleased to rise to make some comments on London—Fanshawe's 10-minute presentation.

I have to say as a parent that I want to get this right. As a legislator, we have a responsibility to ensure that our children are protected, whether they're in school or playing in sports in our communities. I want to make sure we do it right. Bill 14, Bill 13—I don't care. Let's just make sure it's done right.

**1010**

There is an example of a program in my community of Dufferin—Caledon that has been doing some excellent work—their mission includes the prevention of violence. Family Transition Place is who has been doing it since 2000, and they have a highly successful, multi-session program based in the local school program. I've actually been working with various Ministers of Education to try to go beyond the Dufferin—Caledon borders. It's an eight- to 10-week program that focuses on developing skills and attitudes that enable youth to build and maintain healthy relationships based on mutual respect. The program includes discussions around healthy body image, assertive communication skills, healthy anger strategies, bullying, cyberbullying, self-esteem and confidence.

Since the program began, feedback from the two school boards that are currently participating, the Upper Grand District School Board and the Peel District School Board, has been overwhelmingly positive. Family Transition Place and their small team of three young people has been basically overwhelmed with the amount of requests for, "Come into our school. Help us deal with an issue that we have been trying to handle and we can't get a handle on."

So I just want to give a shout-out to Family Transition Place. I would encourage all members and the Minister of Education to delve further into that program, because it is phenomenal.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank the member from London—Fanshawe for her good presentation. I can relate back to days long gone by, in the 1960s and 1970s, in my household. At the time, my mom was trying to get me to do figure skating and tennis. My dad wanted boxing, baseball and hockey. Guess who won: my dad. So I can understand the problem.

When I was in school, I was not the largest guy at the time. I grew later in life a little bit; in high school, I sprouted up. I was small but I was feisty, and I used to hate the bullies. I used to hate people bullying the little guys, and I had more than one altercation in school over the years, going after the bully, because I felt that they were not only using size; they were using intimidation and scare tactics. These kids were going home scared to death, afraid to come to school. I had one friend in particular that I used to walk to school with because he got picked on. There were a few fights in the ditches, I'll tell you, on the way to school and back.

I'll tell you, it's a sad day when kids pick on kids because they're different. I think that everyone has their rightful place in society and should be treated with respect and honour. I, for one, don't like bullies, and I, for one, would stand up against bullies.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Just to continue my thoughts from last week on this very important topic of anti-bullying and Bill 13: As a chair of a student community council for many years in my riding of Pickering—Scarborough East and as a current member of the special advisory committee in the Durham District School Board, many people often ask me: "Why do we have to do this in the school environment? Isn't this the parents' responsibility to teach the proper values and behaviours at home?" To which I say, "Yes, it does start at home, but we do know that socialization, being at school, being with peers and friends, is where our values continue to get shaped and developed." In fact, the research shows that the relationships children have with their peers, with their teachers and so on, play as big a role, if not even a bigger role, as children progress through to high school and beyond, than even the relationships with immediate family members. So it is extremely important that this legislation focus on providing the right kind of accountability, the right kind of supports for people in the school environment, whether it's the bully, the bystander, the witness or the staff. It's all critical that it happens at school.

The McGuinty government is committed to passing this bill as soon as possible. We want this in place before September of this school year. We're committed to working with our colleagues to make this happen, and I strongly, strongly encourage the opposition not to play any games, not to ring any bells, and I call on them to help us pass this legislation as soon as possible.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for London—Fanshawe has two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, Speaker, and those who commented on my thoughts on Bill 13. I think what I really want to say from the heart on Bill 13 is that the reasons why bullies do their bullying—we need to address that as well, because prevention, I think, starts first where the source is. Going back to when I was in public school, I think that's why I got along with—I wanted to understand why, and also advocate on my friend's part that she was a good person and, you know, "You've got to get to know her," so that these people would stop teasing her and verbally tormenting her.

I think understanding where it's coming from is very important, so that it can be prevented in the future—and also, of course, understanding the people who are the target of the bullying. They need support, and they need to have the proper resources in school to overcome this damage that can be done to your self-esteem and confidence over time so that they can grow into healthy young adults and eventually become parents and become just somebody who's content with who they are.

We know that those scars can follow you for quite some time when people call you Four Eyes. In my case, I was called Four Eyes. It never bothered me. I kind of thought it was the way it was and that was just a little—if you wore glasses, you were called Four Eyes. But there were other kids who took it harder, and that's what we have to remember. Not everybody will take a tease or bullying the same way, and the outcome can affect people differently.

So when we're designing this bill, I think we need to make sure we have the preventive measures and look at why people are bullying, why the children are bullying. And the people that are being bullied, let's try to help them to get over that type of trauma.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** It being past 10:15 of the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** It's my pleasure to welcome, from the Association of Condominium Managers, Dean McCabe, Robert Weinberg, Debbie Wilson and Steve Christodoulou. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'd like to welcome and introduce the grade 10 class from Greenwood College School in the riding of St. Paul's. They're going to be joining us in the Legislature in a few minutes. They're here to tour the facility and witness democracy in action.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Please join me in welcoming, from the Canadian Condominium Institute, Brian Horlick and Bob Girard.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm delighted to welcome back and to welcome the family of wonderful page Seph Marshall Burghardt. They are Richard Marshall, Madeline Burghardt, Raffi Marshall Burghardt, Tonnar

Marshall Burghardt, Paul Young, Kristin Marshall and Fiona Marshall-Young. We welcome you all to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Welcome to Armand Conant, who's a constituent of mine in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, and Sally Thompson, who are here from the Canadian Condominium Institute.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Ms. Ashlen Morrisson. She's a co-op student at Georgian College, and she has been working in my office in Orillia over the last four months. Welcome, Ashlen.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Mr. Speaker, I've got visitors from Newtonbrook Collegiate who are here. They're in the building, and I'm sure they'll join us shortly. I just wanted to welcome them.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today the Association of Condominium Managers, who will be meeting with members. I'm particularly excited that Brian Horlick, vice-president of the association, and Karen Reynolds, the treasurer, will be here. Welcome to Queen's Park. I look forward to our meeting.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure to welcome to the Legislature the father and grandparents of Dominique Mastronardi, our legislative page from Chatham-Kent-Essex. Please join me in welcoming her father, Domenic; her nonno Diego; and her nonna Ascenzina Mastronardi to Queen's Park. Benvenuti.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Buon giorno.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario to the Legislature, and the Canadian Condominium Institute as well.

## MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On Monday, March 26, the member from Northumberland-Quinte West, Mr. Milligan, raised a point of privilege with respect to restrictions on his movement in the Legislative Building that he claimed he had experienced on Thursday, March 22.

The members from Beaches-East York, Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, Timmins-James Bay, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, and the official opposition and government House leaders also contributed to this point.

The member for Northumberland-Quinte West recounted how he was making his way along the second floor west hallway to a planned meeting in room 230. As he came in the vicinity of the government caucus room, room 247, the member says that he and the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound were physically blocked by an individual from moving down the hallway, apparently as a result of that person's mistaken belief that he and the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound were in that area in order to seek access to an event then taking place in room 247. By the member's own account, once it was



clarified that he and the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound were actually on their way to room 230, they were allowed to pass without further difficulty. I will return to this issue in a moment.

During the time I heard this point of privilege last Monday, the member from Beaches–East York recounted his own experience related to the event in room 247. Though the members for Northumberland–Quinte West and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound were not seeking to enter room 247, the member from Beaches–East York was, apparently at around the same time the member from Northumberland–Quinte West met the obstacle to his movement in that area. The member for Beaches–East York explained that, following a ceremony outside the Legislative Building in commemoration of Greek Independence Day, to which all MPPs were invited, an open invitation was apparently given for all participants to attend a reception related to this event inside the Legislative Building in the government caucus room, room 247.

As intimated by the experience of the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, this, in fact, was not intended to be a fully open event, and it is now quite clear that non-government members of the assembly were not intended to have access to the event in room 247, and in fact were not allowed to attend. This issue is collateral to the point of privilege, but I want to deal with it now.

First, I have no problem with the notion that the party caucus rooms are private spaces and that it is entirely up to each caucus to decide which individuals it is prepared to invite into its space. I think this is something all members accept, and I don't believe it is in dispute. Indeed, the member from Beaches–East York is not making the claim that he had the right to enter room 247 for the Greek Independence Day reception. However, it also does not seem to be contested that a rather open and unconditional invitation seems to have been communicated to those attending the ceremony out front of this building to attend the reception. This was either a miscommunication or an unfortunate lapse, but the result was a situation that I have no reason to doubt caused the extreme embarrassment to the member from Beaches–East York that he recounted to this House.

The matter arises from time to time as to difficulties MPPs sometimes have in attending or participating in events around the Legislative Assembly, events that are ostensibly either non-partisan or multi-partisan in nature. A recent example occurred in October 2010, raised by the then-member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, with respect to an event in the legislative dining room. The circumstances were not the same as those in this case, but the general principle is the same: the overall desire on the part of the Speaker for members from all parties to participate to the fullest extent possible in the various stakeholder events that occur on a regular basis at Queen's Park.

As Speaker Peters said in his ruling at that time, "The overall success of such events is surely more likely to be

achieved with good attendance by many members from all parties." Indeed, it was Speaker Peters' action as a result of that incident that resulted in the placement of monitors in each of the chamber lobbies that advise members of the various meetings, receptions and other events taking place at the Legislature.

In the face of a written apology subsequently received from the government House leader, I am prepared to accept that the embarrassing difficulty encountered by the member for Beaches–East York was the result of a regrettable communication problem. However, I want to echo Speaker Peters' sentiment from his ruling of 2010 and to strongly urge the organizers of such events to avoid future situations such as this. We are all members of this Legislative Assembly, representative of many diverse communities across the province. One would hope that whatever partisan sentiments exist could be overcome in the interests of properly welcoming guests and dignitaries to this place, particularly when it was celebrating something as universal as Greek Independence Day.

1040

I will return to the point of privilege raised by the member for Northumberland–Quinte West, which is centred around these same events. I cannot find a prima facie case of privilege being made out, for two reasons. First, by the member's own versions of the event, he was not obstructed in his movements in the building so much as he was briefly delayed due to what was, as has been established with respect to the member for Beaches–East York and as confirmed in a letter by the government House leader, a misunderstanding. This delay was short and I believe it was as a result of a genuine mix-up and not a deliberate effort to interfere with a member of this assembly.

Second, the member was not making his way to a parliamentary proceeding. The member's written submission makes reference to a 2010 ruling by Speaker Peters concerning the 2010 budget lock-up, in which it was stated:

"For a prima facie case of privilege to be established, it is enough to ascertain that members wanted to attend the House and were, at least for a time, and against their will, prevented from doing so. It is of no significance where such obstruction occurred or what parliamentary proceeding members were prevented from attending."

The reference to "parliamentary proceeding" is important, and elsewhere in the 2010 ruling, Speaker Peters explained why:

"The second consideration on this matter is the issue of whether the alleged interference prevented members from attending to their parliamentary work. According to the procedural authorities and many previous Speakers' rulings, parliamentary privilege protects members in the execution of their strictly parliamentary duties—not the constituency or other duties that may fairly be said to be part of their job descriptions. On this point, the 2nd edition of Maingot's Parliamentary Privilege in Canada states the following (at pages 222 and 223):

“The interference, however, must not only obstruct the member in his capacity as a member; it must obstruct or allege to obstruct a member in his parliamentary work.”

While I cannot find that a *prima facie* case of privilege has been established, I do not want to leave the impression that I don't take this matter seriously or that it is somehow acceptable to impede or delay a member of the Legislative Assembly, so long as he or she is not headed to the chamber or a committee meetings. No one has any business interfering with an MPP's movement around the public areas of this building, except perhaps in the case of a safety or security issue, and even then only by authorized personnel acting under my authority. It is otherwise not acceptable, and I was unhappy to learn that the events that gave rise to this point of privilege occurred.

I thank the member from Northumberland-Quinte West for raising this matter. It has given me an opportunity to offer this caution.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### JOB CREATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A simple question to the Premier: Premier, do you believe that lower business taxes lead to job creation and, conversely, that increasing business taxes will harm job creation in the great province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate very much the question. We believe in balance. We believe in both strong public services and a competitive business environment. We believe that's exactly what Ontarians, what our families and our businesses, are asking of us.

My honourable colleague will know that we have made tremendous progress in getting our taxes down. Whether we're talking about personal income taxes, corporate taxes, capital taxes or small business taxes, we have made tremendous progress in Ontario. In fact, on the corporate tax front today in Ontario, combined with the federal corporate tax, our taxes are lower than every US state. We're now on a very competitive footing with the European Union.

So again, I'm proud of our record. We've got our taxes down, but at this point in time it's important that we hit the pause button as a matter of balance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It appears that Premier Wiggles is back for a second day. I had a very simple question: Do you believe it leads to job creation? I got a yes, a no and a maybe all in the same answer.

Premier, our position is clear. We believe that lower taxes on job creators will create jobs in the province of Ontario, will fire up our economy. This budget gave a choice of heading down two paths: one of celebrating mediocrity, that Ontario will always be in a decline of big deficits and runaway spending; or a plan that the Ontario

Progressive Conservatives believe in, to fire up job creation, that Ontario's destiny is to lead again, to be the strongest province in all of Confederation and the best place to find a good job.

Premier, it was shocking that your budget was totally vacant of new ideas on job creation, and it was a sadly weak approach on the deficit. Will you reconsider and get back on the path of lower business—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I remind my honourable colleague of our record when it comes to reducing corporate taxes, making our business tax environment all the more competitive for Ontario businesses. In fact, we remain, in all of North America after California, the most attractive destination for foreign direct investment.

And I'll draw to my honourable colleague's attention something that is worthy of note. In 2002, my colleagues who were there at that point in time voted for a measure in the budget of the day that froze corporate taxes because they thought it was important to do so, given our economic circumstances. Why is it they felt it was appropriate and responsible at that time to do exactly that, but today of course it's another matter?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I was proud to be part of the government that helped create a million new jobs in the province of Ontario, that led Canada and North America in job creation, Premier, which is what the Premier simply does not understand.

It is very disappointing that in a time when we're crying out for job creation, a new approach, the only new idea you had in this budget was some new council to study the problems. The 600,000 unemployed women and men don't have time for yet another study to tell them what they should know: Lower business taxes, get rid of your massive subsidies for wind and solar that are driving jobs out of the province through higher rates, invest in the skilled trades and adapt our proposal for 200,000 skilled trade jobs.

Premier, why are you rejecting every good idea that will help fire up the economy and move our province—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's a matter of choices, Speaker. It's a matter of balance. Our decision in our budget to freeze further reductions of our corporate income tax will save us, over three years, \$1.5 billion. By applying the same approach to the business education tax, that saves us \$600 million. That's \$2.1 billion. With that, we can afford to go ahead with full-day kindergarten. We can afford to invest in the growth of the Ontario child benefit. We can afford to have small classes. We can afford to keep 20,000 people who work in our schools on the job. Those are the trade-offs that we engage in here.

It's a matter of balance. We've done on a lot on the corporate income tax front. Not even representatives in the business community are honestly coming forward and



saying that, at this point in time, we should further reduce corporate income taxes. They appreciate it's a time to make the right choices. It's a time to bring balance and prudence to our fiscal circumstances.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier on the lack of any kind of jobs plan in his recent budget. The Premier uses the terms "matter of choices" and "balanced." The Premier has made several choices when it comes to business taxes. In fact, you campaigned on increasing them, and you increased business tax in the province of Ontario. Then, we dragged you kicking and screaming to try to lower taxes, and now you're heading in the opposite direction to increase them again.

There's nothing balanced about this roller coaster ride you've taken business tax rates in the province. In fact, you're undermining confidence in the province of Ontario. I think it betrays your attitude when you say this saves the government money. In fact, you're basically saying that all that revenue is yours for the taking, except what you leave to stay in the pockets of families or businesses.

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We believe in lower taxes to fire up the economy. That's the path Ontario should be on. Premier, why do you have no jobs plan in your budget, with 600,000 unemployed women and men?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I think it's become apparent that, regardless of what we would have introduced by way of measures in this budget, the leader of the official opposition and his party had long ago decided they weren't going to support our budget. What they want to do is force an unnecessary \$150-million election on the people of Ontario.

What we need right now is certainty and stability. The economy remains just a little bit fragile. What we owe to Ontario families, what we owe to Ontario businesses and what we owe to the international investment community, who's looking for confidence in our economy today and tomorrow, is certainty and stability.

Our plan is a strong plan. It cuts our costs, it protects public services and it creates new jobs. That's what we need.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, we've seen eight years of reckless spending. We've seen eight years of tax hikes. We've seen eight years of foolish investments in corporate welfare schemes, like your recent WindTronics project in Windsor that took \$2.7 million and then closed their door. It is time for a change.

Of course, the Premier says that he's going to hit the pause button. He should hit the eject button on his failed economic policies and take us down a different path.

I know, Premier, that you seem to accept that Ontario is in decline and your role is to simply gently manage that decline. We see a better, stronger, more prosperous Ontario. We see a better future for our children and

grandchildren, but you need policies that will fire up the economy. You need a jobs plan, because you can't simply cut your way to prosperity. We've laid out good ideas, Premier. Which of our ideas will you actually take to help fire up our economy again?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we're open to the good ones; it's just that we haven't heard many.

Again, I say to my honourable colleague, I think we need to be very, very honest with ourselves. From the get-go, from the moment that the leader of the official opposition entered the lock-up on budget day, he and his party had made up their minds that under no circumstances were they going to support this budget. What they want to do is force an unnecessary \$150-million publicly funded election on the people of Ontario, exactly at a time when our economy demands stability—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You know, it was a surprisingly weak approach to the debt crisis in your budget, Premier, and a shocking absence of a jobs policy. We're going to stand up for Ontario families and say that there's a better future if we take a different path. We reject their approach, Speaker, which says that we should settle for mediocrity, that big government spending is a solution to our problems. We believe in a growth plan, and we believe in making the tough decisions to balance the books.

Premier, I was shocked to see that the federal government will actually balance their budget two years ahead of the province of Ontario, that their debts will actually be lower than the province of Ontario's. Can you tell me, has there been any time in the history of Confederation where the province of Ontario has run a bigger deficit and for a longer period of time than the national government of Canada? Isn't that an extraordinary failure of you and your finance minister to set priorities in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Our budget, again, I say, makes the right choices. It puts us on track to balance by 2017-18. It protects our schools, it protects our health care and it creates 170,000 jobs, to be clear on that score. There's lots to like in our budget, Speaker.

But if you want to go to war with the unions, with teachers and doctors, you're not going to like our budget. If you want to make cuts to our schools and our health care, you're not going to like this budget. If you don't like balance, if you don't like prudence, if you don't like a resolve to do what is necessary at this point in our history, you're not going to like our budget.

But if, on the other hand, you want to protect our schools, you want to protect our health care, you want to create new jobs, you want to put us on a steady path to achieve balance by 2017-18, then there's lots to like in the budget that we've put forward.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question?

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Families were looking to this budget to address their priorities. Instead, they were shown a budget with thousands of job losses, cuts in health care and shortcomings that are going to make their life much more expensive.

Steve from London writes that the budget is “unfair to the tens of thousands of people already on waiting lists for child care and health care services and supports.”

Does the Premier agree with Steve that this budget is unfair to families?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, obviously I welcome the question from my honourable colleague, but I cannot share her perspective. I would encourage her to inform people, as she moves around the province, about the actual contents of our budget.

Let's talk about the single most important aspirational public service that we could possibly deliver to families, and that's the best possible education for their children. We are protecting and continuing to roll out full-day kindergarten. We are protecting small classes. We are protecting the jobs of our educational support workers who play such a vital role in delivering great-quality education to all our children.

We're protecting a 30%-off tuition grant that is benefiting low-income and middle-income families to ensure that all our children have access and affordability when it comes to pursuing college and university training in Ontario. That's what we're doing for Ontario families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, with phone calls, town hall meetings, door knocking, emails and newsletters, we've reached out to over 30,000 people for their thoughts on the budget. They agree that we need to balance the books, but they're concerned about balancing the burden, as well.

Karen from Windsor writes, “This budget is unfair to the poor and disabled citizens.”

Richard from Napanee says, “I do not like the budget because it places an unfair burden on the people and businesses at the low end of the economic ladder.”

What does the Premier say to people who feel his plan for balance puts an unfair burden on those who can least afford the hit?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, it's not surprising: The official opposition says that we're not going far enough; the leader of the NDP says that we've gone too far. I would say that, again, we've brought balance.

My honourable colleague the leader of the NDP said that it was important that we freeze corporate income taxes. We've done that, and we've gone one step further by freezing business education taxes.

She says that the wealthy are getting off scot-free. We have a new program, the first of its kind here in Ontario, that is going to require that our wealthiest seniors contribute more to the cost of their drugs. We think that is fair in our circumstances.

We've also found a way to continue to invest in a program in which we have a great deal of pride, and that's our Ontario child benefit.

Those are all dimensions of a budget which I think lend to it a very responsible, balanced and prudent character.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Theresa from Delaware, Ontario, writes, “I expect the elected members to work together and make things fair and workable in Ontario.”

Brian from Brantford says, “It is too early for another provincial election. Try to make this work.”

So instead of ruling—

*Applause.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm glad the Liberals are on my side, Speaker. It's about time.

My question is about that very issue, about trying to make things work. Instead of ruling everything out, which is what we're hearing the Liberals say every single day, will the Premier listen to some of the proposals being put forward by families, work together with us and try to make this budget a little more fair for them?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we've always maintained that we have an open mind and we will gladly entertain any thoughtful, responsible, constructive proposals put forward by either of the opposition parties. But we tried to lay out a few parameters.

Speaker, what we've said is we can't take on any new spending. I think Ontarians generally understand that.

They also know that we've got to balance by 2017-18; we made a commitment to that. We've also got to make sure we protect our public services, especially our schools and our health care, and we've got to find a way to build a stronger economy and build a stronger foundation for jobs and growth.

Those are the broad parameters, and inside those I am convinced that if there's a constructive proposal that comes forward from the other side, we'll be more than pleased to entertain that.

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## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier. Ontarians know that we face some tough challenges. They know we have difficult choices to make, but they expect to be treated fairly.

Over the last week, Ontarians have shared their disappointment with a budget that leaves them falling behind. Aaron from Timmins writes that it's “simply not fair to insist on balancing the books on the backs of the people who drive the provincial economy.”

Will the Premier explain to people like Aaron why this budget has let so many families down?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I have a different perspective in terms of how our budget has been received. I think it has been, broadly speaking, well received. We lay no claim to doing anything perfectly in government; we're



made up entirely and exclusively of human beings. We're open to any suggestions for improvements to our budget, but I think we've got it just about right, Speaker.

Again, I say, the official opposition says that we're not going fast enough; the NDP say that we're going too fast. Speaker, we've tried to balance the economic needs with the needs for us to protect our schools, protect our health care and to, in fact, have a hard deadline for balance by 2017-18. We believe that the actions we're taking in this budget will inspire the confidence of families and businesses and, just as importantly, the international investment community.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** As I've already said, Ontarians understand the hardships that are facing our province and they're willing to do their part, but they expect everyone to carry a fair share; they don't feel like they've been given a fair shake.

Terry from Ottawa writes—I don't think it's your Terri from Ottawa, Mr. Premier—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Terry from Ottawa writes, "It is unfair to make the poorest in our society be burdened the most."

"This budget is grossly unfair to those in the lower social economic groups," says Steve from Mississauga.

My question is quite basic: Is the Premier ready to admit that Terry and Steve may have a point, and that this budget could be made a little more fair?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I want to put my honourable colleague on notice: I will be FOIing the telephone records or email records connected with that Terry from Ottawa, just to make sure.

Speaker, again, I say to my honourable colleague, we're open. We're not claiming that this is the best possible budget ever introduced by any government anywhere in the world. If there is a positive, constructive proposal that can come forward that's in keeping with those broad parameters that I've put in place, then, as I like to say, we're all ears, and we'd be very pleased to entertain any such positive proposals.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Sharlyn from Garson says the budget is "not fair to seniors," and Peter from Toronto wants the budget to "make sure that social assistance is indexed fairly."

It's clear that people across the province don't see the pain in this budget being shared fairly. What does the Premier say to those people who find this budget much, much less than fair?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague touched on seniors, and an important part of our budget speaks to seniors. In fact, Speaker, you will know, if you ever have the chance to go into a seniors' residence, quickly the talk will turn to their grandchildren and their future. What we're doing, as a government, is to make sure they have all the opportunities that they need to

grow up strong and succeed, which brings us back to education.

But, Speaker, I think the other thing that's really important to note is that our budget makes a deliberate transition, as part of the action plan put forward by the Minister of Health, that we put more focus on community-based care, that we transition from a heavy emphasis on hospital-based care to community-based care, especially including home care. That's one of the things that our budget does. That's one of the things that our budget specifically supports. In fact, we're increasing our funding for home care by some 4%.

So, again, I say to my honourable colleague, I think we're moving in the right direction. I think we have a great deal in common in terms of the values that inform this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### POWER PLANT

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, yesterday, you were on your feet defending the \$300-million legal trouble your government is in over the cancelled Mississauga power plant. At about the same time you were doing that, a massive shiny new transformer was holding up traffic while being delivered to that very site.

Minister, you had the perfect chance to tell us about that yesterday, yet you said nothing. Really, Minister, just how many more parts to this power plant to nowhere are going to be delivered? Please tell us and the residents of Mississauga: Is this power plant cancelled or not?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The power plant is not proceeding at that site. We've been very clear. I do appreciate the support of the official opposition for that decision, and I'm trusting that that support continues, not only from the Leader of the Opposition—he's spoken to it recently—but also from the member from Nipissing.

I understand that the equipment that was delivered to the site yesterday had been obtained a long time ago and was delivered only for storage. There is no construction proceeding at that site, I am advised, and discussions about the relocation and other options about the site and the equipment continue between the Ontario Power Authority and Greenfield.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** My supplementary is: Minister, why should anybody believe you when your government says one thing and does something different on every single file? Not only does this government have this new transformer to play with, but now, more than that, we've learned that a 200,000-square-foot warehouse has been rented on Stanfield Road at the Queensway to store even more power plant equipment. Minister, why haven't you told us about this massive expense, and what else is being hidden in that warehouse?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I know the residents of Mississauga and the surrounding communities very much

supported the decision not to proceed with that plant. I heard—and I've heard many times—the official opposition support the decision not to proceed with that plant, so I appreciate the questions, and I reaffirm that that plant will not be proceeding at that site. And I trust that while my friend asks us about that decision not to proceed with the plant at that site, that in asking the question, his support for that decision is not wavering and that the residents of Mississauga and the surrounding communities do not need to take from his question that his support for something that they took a position on at the very beginning is no different than it was. They don't want the plant there any more than we—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Last evening, a staff person from the Premier's office called into question the integrity of the Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Does the Premier agree with his government's blame game?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The Standing Committee on Public Accounts is conducting very comprehensive hearings into the Ornge situation. They'll be meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, to hear from a series of witnesses, and I know at the moment they're in the process of going through the various preparations for the hearing.

Mr. Speaker, there have been questions raised about members of the opposition—just as they've asked about who on the government side knew what, I think it's completely appropriate that we ask who on the opposition side was given the so-called red flags about Ornge, including the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, the Chair of the committee, who we have been told did a two-hour tour of Ornge at the behest of a Conservative lobbyist in June 2010.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?  
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**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** This is rather sad.

Back to the Premier: Here's exactly what one of your employees in your office said: "Norm Miller met with Ornge top executives in 2010. What did he tell them? Can he still be an impartial Chair at public hearings?"

This is a witch-hunt, Mr. Speaker, on opposition MPPs. Many of us have asked the right questions at the right time. This looks like either a desperate attack from or a sad commentary on this government. Or is it both? Which one is it, Mr. Premier?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Government House leader.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Government House leader.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Answer the question, John.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew will come to order—second time.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I'm having a hard time following the line of questioning. For week after week, we have been hearing from the opposition that because the Minister of Health had received a letter or received a briefing, somehow she should have known about the problems at Ornge.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. I do want to hear the answer.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville and the member from Durham will come to order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Disappointing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Again; second time.

Minister?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we will not be held to a double standard on this side of the House. The simple fact is that when the opposition has stood up and questioned our dealings with Ornge over the past number of years, we have every right to go to the public accounts committee and ask: Why did the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, at the behest of a well-known Conservative lobbyist, Kelly Mitchell, who was involved in their campaign, when he went on a two-hour tour of Ornge—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. In 2003, Ontarians elected a bold and decisive government to help fix our apprenticeship system, which was left in a shambles by the previous Conservative government. That's why our government appointed Mr. Armstrong, who authored the 2008 Compulsory Certification Review report, which initiated the need for the College of Trades. The call for the college was further strengthened by Mr. Whitaker's report.

When Mr. Armstrong consulted the skilled trades industry, we found out that they wanted a greater voice in the decision-making process surrounding the apprenticeship and skilled trades system. Our government listened to them and took action by creating the College of Trades, an industry-driven body, to take on this task.

Constituents in my riding involved in the trades have been indicating that they want to participate in the ratio review process. When will the college call for ratio review submissions?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank my friend from Richmond Hill for his advocacy on apprenticeships and higher education and the great work he's done in that ministry over the years.

I find the opposition somewhat comical sometimes, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition had the



chutzpah to suggest that there's this mythical 200,000 apprenticeships out there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Direct to government on policy, please.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Our record is 28,000 apprenticeships per year. Theirs was 12,000. The most successful program in Ontario history, they call a failure. I guess theirs is a complete unmitigated disaster.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** The College of Trades released today the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Durham has now been warned.

*Supplementary.*

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** We have heard a lot of irresponsible accusations over the past few months from the members of the opposition, who are trying to tarnish the important work the College of Trades is doing.

It's great that the College of Trades has started a call for submissions to review the apprenticeship ratios for the 34 skilled trades. Many people in the skilled trades are pleased that the college will review ratios every four years, and they will be able to participate in ensuring that their views are considered in these important decisions.

The college is the best way to ensure that the needs of employers, employees, apprentices, the economy and the interests of the public are considered.

**Mr. Speaker,** through you to the minister: Can the minister tell this House on what basis the decision will be made for ratio reviews?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** You wouldn't know it from some of the things you hear in this House, but the criteria that the panels measure was actually in the legislation. It has been published and it has been recirculated. Hearings are now starting on floor covering installers, hoisting engineers, mobile crane operators and tower crane operators as well as precast concrete erectors and cement concrete finishers.

As you know, for about 20 years, we had a very delayed apprenticeship program where only seven apprenticeships were approved. We have now more going to be released for consideration than, I think, historically has ever been approved. This is an open, transparent process of which anybody can do that.

I hope the opposition, for all the carping they've done, will actually show up and put their submissions in. I also want to acknowledge the third party, who have been very supportive of this process and have been very constructive. I want to thank them as well.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Minister of Health: In two short hours of hearings at the public accounts committee, the minister and her officials lost more credibility—and I might say the House leader is losing his rapidly. Rather than instill confidence by admitting that they failed in

their oversight responsibilities, as very clearly stated by the Auditor General, the minister and her officials continued to deny that they had any responsibility.

Can the minister tell us again today why we should have confidence not only in her, but, based on the performance of her deputy, who demonstrated that he hadn't even read that report, why we should have any confidence that this minister and her officials have the integrity they need to run that ministry?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I was very pleased to attend the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. I was invited for one hour, and I chose to be there for two and a half hours, because I think it's very important that the public does get straight answers, and that is exactly what we have provided.

We welcome the Auditor General's report. The Auditor General himself acknowledged that we have taken substantive, concrete action. The Auditor General has actually talked about the sea change of attitude since we put new management in place at Ornge. We've taken the appropriate actions. We are moving forward. There is new leadership in place. We have a new performance agreement in place. I have introduced legislation to entrench that in law. I look forward to the support from the member opposite.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Well, clearly the ministry officials are taking their lead from their minister: deny responsibility, make excuses, deflect accountability, and when all else fails, shrug and blame someone else.

When asked why the emergency services branch of the ministry failed to ensure that the interiors of the new helicopters met even the most basic of standards, the deputy replied that the medical director of Ornge had misled the ministry. When asked why he was still the medical director, the new CEO said, "I see no reason to let him go."

New CEO, new board, new agreement and the same old lack of leadership and accountability and refusal to accept responsibility. When will the minister recognize that her refusal to accept responsibility has inspired a culture of incompetence at her ministry? When will she realize that and set an example and step aside?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. Please be seated. Please be seated. Thank you.

*Minister?*

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I take my responsibility extremely seriously. Whether it comes to fixing the problems at Ornge or whether it comes to leading a transformation in the way we are delivering health care in this province, I take my responsibility to the public extremely seriously.

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I am focusing on the issues that matter to the people of this province, Speaker. I am focusing on issues of improving patient care, improving home care, improving community care. I am very focused on providing the best possible health care to the people of Ontario and getting

the best possible value for money. I'm proud of the work that the people in this province are doing, the people in health care, Speaker, and I completely reject—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Let me share some more stories with you that we've been hearing directly from the people of this province, many of whom are concerned about a budget that does not distribute the burden equally across the people who live here.

Menno from London writes, "I dislike the austerity program that further impoverishes the most vulnerable and poor of our province." Or Rebecca from Toronto, who writes, "It is simply unfair to put deficit reduction on the backs of people on ODSP."

What does the minister have to say to people like Rebecca and/or Menno, who feel his plan for balance puts an unfair burden on those who can least afford it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What I would say to the individuals referenced and Ontarians across the province is that this government has pursued a strong and aggressive agenda on poverty, particularly children in poverty. Full-day kindergarten, which we are protecting in this budget, is very important to families of more modest means. We created and accelerated the Ontario child benefit. I remind the member opposite that he and his colleagues voted against it. We are proceeding with that. We're doing the additions over two years instead of one. It's not a choice we made lightly. It's not one that we like, but we are doing it because it's important to young people as well that we get back to balance by 2017-18.

We have increased social assistance rates seven times—13.7%—since we took office, Mr. Speaker. That record is important. We are continuing to build on that record—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The sad reality is that you're not building on it at all.

On the budget, David from Ottawa writes, "It is unfair in some ways. It hits at the people who they feel are easiest to hit."

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Better check out which David that is, too.

Linda in Toronto writes, "There was no new funding for child care, which is desperately needed to avert a crisis, with many"—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. Member?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Linda from Toronto writes, "There was no new funding for child care, which is desperately needed to avert a crisis, with many centres being forced to close."

Will this minister and this Premier explain to people like Linda and David why this budget has let so many of them down?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll remind the member opposite that the largest line item increase in this budget was for social services, Mr. Speaker: 2.7%.

There is more to do in a range of areas. We acknowledge that. We will continue to do that. We believe strongly the most important thing we can do for all Ontario families is to get the budget back to balance, restore and maintain those services that are vital to people of all means: a strong and vibrant education system, a public health care system that's accessible and working for all Ontarians. Those are the choices we made.

You simply can't argue about increasing spending on every line item day in, day out without saying how you'll get back to balance. We've laid out a plan. It protects education. It protects health care. It serves the most vulnerable in this province well. We made difficult choices. This—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Attorney General. I'm sure all members will strongly believe that access to justice is a fundamental necessity in our judicial system. As a lawyer, Speaker, I have worked within our court system, and I can tell you that, sometimes, interacting with the justice system can be a very daunting experience for people. It is our responsibility to ensure that our constituents have the right tools and information to be able to use the system efficiently, as is their right. Helping people to know the forms to fill out, where to go for their court date, what they need to bring on that day, who they need to contact and many other circumstances like these is very important.

The government has previously committed to helping to modernize the justice system to make it easier for all Ontarians to get the information they need.

Through you, Speaker, would the Attorney General tell us what progress has been made on modernizing and how we are helping citizens more efficiently and easily access our justice system?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I thank the always hard-working member from Ottawa Centre for this question. I know he's very much interested in an accessible system of justice.

Of course, an effective and accessible system of justice has always been this government's priority. We've been modernizing the system over the years, and the Minister of Finance, in this year's budget, announced a further modernization. Our government will be taking the next steps in modernizing the system by providing some online services. For example, court forms: The filing of court documentation and the payment of court fees will in the future be able to be done online. This transformational initiative will improve access to justice



for Ontarians by moving to provide 24-hour online services.

We're also moving forward—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:**—fully modernizing and electronic courtrooms that will provide the opportunity for remote appearances, reducing the need for witnesses to travel—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister. Another reminder that when I ask you and say at the end, “Thank you,” that means you sit down. If you make me stand up, you're just hurting my knees. So thank you.

Member.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm sure the minister has so much to share. That's why it takes a little while. These are transformational changes.

These are important efforts. Everyone can see that our world has changed remarkably in the past number of years as the Internet and mobile technology have completely revolutionized the way in which we gather and use information and interact with the world around us. We must respond to the changing nature of how people are conducting their lives and doing business in the 21st century. It's important because it makes the system more cost-effective for those who use it, as well.

Speaker, through you, would the Attorney General tell us how we are ensuring that Ontarians have the right tools in this modern age to understand and use our justice system effectively?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Speaker, there's so much good news here and so little time to say it in, really.

Two years ago, the ministry launched the Ontario Court Forms Assistant, which is an online tool which helps people fill out 11 of the most commonly used Family Court and Small Claims Court forms quickly and easily. That's been a great advancement.

We're also using mobile technology to provide more and better ways to get important legal information in the hands of those who need it. Justice Ontario Mobile is a website for mobile device and smart phone users, based on the original Justice Ontario desktop website. This technology strengthens access to justice for Ontarians by making important legal information accessible online from almost anywhere a mobile device or a smart phone can be used.

These are great initiatives that should be supported by all the members in the House to make justice even more accessible to the people of Ontario.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Health. As we learned more and more about the scandal at Ornge last year, the minister on no less than 28 separate occasions stood in this House and made reference to replacing the board of directors at Ornge. March 6: “We replaced the board.” March 8: “We

replaced the board.” On March 22, when referring to replacing the board, the minister said, “That was my action.”

Mr. Speaker, for months now, the minister has insisted that she replaced the board. That's been her argument for not resigning. I'd like to ask the minister today, would she provide this House with the documentation that she sent to the board of directors terminating their employment at Ornge?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The bottom line is that there is a new board of directors in place, Speaker. The bottom line is that the old board of directors resigned en masse.

As the Auditor General's work continued, as the work of the ministry continued, as the work of the media continued, it became clear to the board of directors at Ornge that their time at—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** You're misleading the House.

1130

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Nepean—Carleton will withdraw.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Withdrawn.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from York South, come to order.

Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, the former board knew that their time at Ornge was up, and it was because they resigned that we've been able to put in place a new board. That new board is taking decisive action.

I met with the COO of Ornge. I met with the chair of the board of Ornge. I made it very clear to them that we were expecting—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Mr. Speaker, again, my question is to the minister. We know that the minister cannot provide documentation that she fired the board because she did not. Last week at public accounts we learned that the board voluntarily resigned.

Despite this, on February 29, 2012, the minister stood in this House and told us and the public this: “We fired the CEO... We fired the board...”

Speaker, we have heard that this minister did not provide oversight. We have heard that this minister ignored all the red flags. We now know that this minister stood in this House and said she fired the board. She did not.

Will she now resign?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The new board is in place at Ornge under the very, very capable leadership of Ian Delaney, the new chair of the board.

When the new board was put in place, I gave them very clear—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Your leadership is in question. Your leadership—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Lennox, come to order.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —responsibilities. The first responsibility—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Peterborough, come to order.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —focus on patient safety. I think the issue of patient safety is of the—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Northumberland, come to order.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —and that is where they're putting their first energies.

They are also winding down all of the for-profits; some are already wound down, others are in the process of being wound down. They are addressing the fiscal issues that were raised by the Auditor General, Speaker, and they are taking that responsibility very, very seriously.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member will withdraw.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Withdrawn.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The board's responsibility was to work with the ministry to negotiate a new performance agreement, Speaker. We have done that. That new performance agreement is in place. It gives us significantly more oversight and requires more—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question?

## TOURISM

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** My question is to the Premier. With the demise of the forest industry and with this government doing nothing productive to facilitate development of the Ring of Fire, northwestern Ontario's tourism sector is left to be the backbone of our economy. Tourism brings hundreds of millions of dollars into our region that would otherwise be spent elsewhere.

In recent years, the industry has been under attack by government policy, including tougher border restrictions and the imposition of the HST.

Now your government, the McGuinty government, plans to close all three of my region's tourist information centres, all of which are located at border crossings.

My question is simple: Will the Premier immediately take action to reverse this erroneous and misguided decision?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, to the Minister of Tourism and Culture.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you very much for the question. Our government delivered a strong budget—a strong budget for a strong Ontario. In order to proactively eliminate the deficit and strengthen the economy, my ministry will transform its programs to secure a sustainable future for tourism, culture and sport.

As part of our plan, we will realign our tourism marketing services by focusing on online travel marketing activities. This will allow us to meet consumers' travel research preferences through major redevelopment

of Ontario's tourism information website, call centre and brochure distribution service.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Speaker, the numbers tell the story. A 2007 study by Industry Canada noted that while tourist activities contributed to regional economies in other regions of the province, most of the money spent is already in Ontario.

The northwest, on the other hand, is importing the vast majority of its tourism dollars from United States, Manitoba and western provinces. It found that the tourists we bring come in primarily to fish and hunt—it's true—but they're more likely to visit nature parks and historical sites along the way, places they learn about through tourist information centres that they visit once they cross the border. The Industry Canada study also found that those tourists spend nearly twice as much as Canadians do during their stay.

So I ask again: Will the Premier reverse his decision to help hard-working tourist operators bring money into the Ontario economy?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Our government has taken a hard look at the way in which it delivers services to Ontarians. We are moving forward to achieve sustainable services. Ontario is stepping up its 24/7 electronic and Internet-based global marketing presence to meet consumers' travel research and booking preferences.

Speaker, let me tell you, visits to the province of Ontario's tourism information centres had dropped by 50% over the last decade as travellers adopted a self-service approach to travel research and—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, come to order.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Speaker, we have installed 23 kiosks in 23 transportation centres. Closing the seven centres that have low and declining visitation makes good business sense.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. A clean, healthy environment is critical to our health, our economy and our quality of life. I am pleased to see the Ministry of the Environment continue to make strong investments in environmental protection so that Ontarians continue to have access to safe drinking water and clean air to breathe.

Speaker, through you, I'm wondering if the minister could elaborate on some of the key investments that will form the Ministry of the Environment's 2012-13 budget.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** It's an excellent question. Our government is committed to protecting the environment, as everyone knows. We've made investing in environmental protection a priority. Since 2000-01, the ministry's budget has increased by 58%, or approximately \$128 million, to protect our air, land and water.

To achieve fiscal targets and to continue to provide the high level of environmental protection Ontarians expect and deserve, the ministry will continue to transform how



services are delivered. We will ensure that we continue to deliver on important environmental priorities such as strengthening the management, protection and conservation of Ontario's water resources, including enhancing actions to protect the Great Lakes; safeguarding Ontario's drinking water from source to tap; delivering on Ontario's climate change strategy; administering the new renewable energy approval system; maximizing waste diversion; and protecting Ontario's—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you, Minister, for outlining those initiatives, all of which are important to my constituents in Windsor West and to our area with respect to the Great Lakes. The 2012 budget ensures that our government can continue providing strong environmental protection.

I understand the ministry is also working to transform how its services are delivered, as well as increasing efficiencies in their programs, especially for environmental approvals. I was pleased to hear that the government is working closely with a broad range of stakeholders to build a modern approvals system that is not only a win for businesses and the public, but more importantly, our environment.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of the Environment: Could you please elaborate on some of the proposed initiatives within the budget that touch on our government's modernization of our approval program?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I thank the member very much. She will be pleased to know that, as I'm very committed to moving Ontario into the electronic age, online, this year's budget touched on an important area of the ministry's mandate: modernization of the approvals process. Now, building on the changes made to our approvals process back in October 2011, the ministry will be looking to move to a full cost recovery for the environmental approvals site registration and environmental compliance approvals. You will note that this was a recommendation of Mr. Drummond in his recent report. 1140

The new EASR, an online tool, will support faster, smarter and streamlined government-to-business services. It's a new risk-based decision-making mechanisms for businesses seeking environmental approvals, with no change to environmental standards.

## JOB CREATION

**Mr. Todd Smith:** From what we've heard again today, I'm not sure this government understands the dire job situation in the province of Ontario.

The question is for the Premier. When Bob Rae was in office, we all remember the record unemployment and over a million on the welfare rolls, and we had Rae days. The Ontario unemployment rate has now been higher than the national average for 62 months. Your budget delivered last week raised taxes on businesses of all sizes. We now have a sequel to Rae days in the province: It's Dalton's depression.

Given that there are 600,000 Ontarians out of work, why did the budget raise taxes on every business in the province, ensuring that the jobs go anywhere but Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, I think the budget creates 170,000 net jobs across this province. It is a budget about jobs. An important part of that will be our southwestern Ontario development fund and our eastern Ontario development fund. That was before a committee of this Legislature just yesterday. As far as I can tell, up till now the PC Party is not supporting that fund.

I want to share with you some of the headlines that are occurring right across the province. Listen to this, from the Stratford Beacon Herald: "For Our MPP, Boss's Orders Trumped Needs of Riding."

Listen to this, from the St. Thomas Times-Journal: "Tory MPPs Miff Local Mayors."

Listen to this, from the Belleville Intelligencer: "Milligan Toed Party Line on EODF."

Mr. Speaker, the headlines go on and on. They're out of touch with eastern Ontario. They're out of touch with southwestern Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Let me share a couple of more headlines for you, if I could.

Jack Mintz in the Financial Post says that your budget is actually going to cost 30,000 Ontario jobs.

The president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business tells me that this budget is more talk and little action. Actually, he says, "With government counting on business for growth and job creation, delaying ... tax measures is poorly timed."

This government is doing harm to small businesses, and you're relying on small businesses to get us out of this Dalton depression. How are small businesses supposed to create jobs when they've got a Premier who can't help himself from raising taxes on small businesses?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'd like to quote a mayor from southwest Ontario, Randy Hope, the mayor of Chatham-Kent. This is what he had to say: "A political party that thinks they understand business certainly doesn't if they voted against" that bill.

I agree with Mayor Hope. I agree with the people of southwestern Ontario. I agree with the people of eastern Ontario. We have to work hard to create jobs in the east. We have to work hard to create jobs in the west. These funds will be an important part of those efforts. They're an important part of this budget. If the PC Party really cared about jobs, they'd be standing up for those funds, they'd be supporting that legislation and they'd be supporting this budget.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We just recently

found out, at the end of March, that the St. Joe's health centre in London has a surplus of 10 million mental health care dollars unspent. So patients are not getting the care they need in London. Please, Minister, explain why that is.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Health.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier, thank you. Minister if Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, this government has made record investments in mental health right across Ontario: in community health, in additions, often-times without the support of the third party.

I'm delighted to hear that they want to work together on the budget as we continue to make those investments and continue to make those important investments in mental health programs.

I had the opportunity, when I was younger, to run one of the largest additions programs in Ontario at the time. I can tell you that the support this government gives to mental health and additions is much greater than any previous government. I worked under, at the time, an NDP government, and they were judicious in cutting our funding year after year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1145 to 1500.*

#### WEARING OF PINS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Oakville on a point of order.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you, Speaker. I believe we have unanimous consent that all members of the Legislature be permitted to wear pins in remembrance of the brave soldiers who made the greatest sacrifice in the successful battle for Vimy Ridge.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we have unanimous consent?

**Interjection:** Agreed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my great pleasure to welcome Ms. Lorris Herenda and her son Richard Ribeiro from Richmond Hill, visiting the House.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### HOCKEY

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** March was a great month to be a hockey fan in Huron-Bruce, especially for four local communities. I want to congratulate Kincardine Knights high school boys' hockey team, who won the gold medal in OFSSA at the end of March. Kincardine was seeded

13th in this provincial tournament with no prior appearances, but they went undefeated through seven games over four days to take the title. A big shout-out goes to Garrett McFadden—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Were they nuclear-powered?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** No, no, but they were certainly powered up.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No heckling.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Garrett McFadden was the only grade 9 student on the Knights, and he scored two goals and had two assists in the winning game, and he led the entire tournament in scoring.

Also, the Miller Insurance Midget Rep Kincardine Kinuks recently took home the all-Ontario championship as well.

Just this past Saturday, both Kincardine teams proudly paraded through town as Ontario champs.

Another big congratulation goes out to the Walkerton Juveniles. They're the first team to ever etch their name on the OMHA Doug Hearn's Juvenile BB trophy as they beat Mooretown in the finals. The great part about this team is that they just formed last year and proved that hard work and determination goes a long way.

I can't forget about the Mildmay Monarchs Peewee Rep team, who also won the OMHA DD title, beating out Lucknow, another Huron-Bruce local town, for the championship.

I want to say a great big thank you to all the coaches, parents and volunteers who worked so hard to make these championship realities come true.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I rise again in this Legislature to speak to an issue that's of great significance to people in my riding of Davenport and to folks across the city of Toronto. In the past few weeks, I've been canvassing with my staff team, with volunteers and talking to people in my riding about the dirty diesel train that's going to be going through the backyards of Davenport residents.

I've spoken with hundreds of families in Davenport and we all share the same concern: We're worried about our health; we're worried about the health of our children, about the health of seniors in our community. I'm here today to bring a message directly from Davenport to Dalton McGuinty: Sir, we do not want diesel trains in our backyard.

After much pressure from the community, the Liberals have admitted that diesel trains are bad for our health, and they've said that they will convert these trains to electric at some point in the distant future, but we need to have a firm deadline. We need to know when this is going to happen. Given what we're told about the current financial situation in Ontario, we think that it makes sense to do it once, to do it properly and to save taxpayers the money that they deserve. We need to do it right the first time. We need to know why Dalton McGuinty refuses to put the health of people in our community first.



## YELLOW BRICK HOUSE

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** In my role as MPP, it's my privilege to have the opportunity to become familiar with the Yellow Brick House in Richmond Hill. The mission of Yellow Brick House is to empower women and children who are victims of domestic violence to rebuild their lives and live free of violence. I visited Yellow Brick House last week and saw first-hand the very critical work they do every day for the women and children in my riding of Richmond Hill.

I am proud to inform this House of Ms. Lorris Herenda's recognition for the Leading Women, Building Communities program. Ms. Herenda has served as the executive director at the Yellow Brick House for the past seven years. Along with her team, Ms. Herenda has worked tirelessly to meet the changing needs of the community and has implemented programs and services in response to the demands of abused women and their children in York region.

As I witnessed first-hand, she is regarded by the staff and her colleagues in the field as an expert and a true example of a great leader. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Ms. Herenda and the team at Yellow Brick House for the important work they do every day for women to live free of violence.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to bring to the attention of the Legislature a concern of the municipality of Dutton/Dunwich. Dutton/Dunwich is a rural community in the western part of my riding. It includes the hamlets of Wallacetown and Duttona Beach and the western parts of both Iona and Iona Station. The community houses a large agricultural community and is highly supported by the local Lions Club.

In the last two years, all but one of the municipality's doctors have ceased practising in this community. This leaves the current doctor overworked and leaves many other patients unable to have a local doctor and having to travel far distances to Chatham or London for a physician. The Dutton area would be in a real predicament if they were to lose their one remaining doctor due to volume burnout.

I want to commend Dr. Peter Sharman on his commitment and dedication to the community. The community is fortunate to have him. I'm calling on the government to review the criteria used to base the determination of an underserved area, as this municipality clearly needs assistance in attracting another physician to this rural community. The last thing anybody wants is further crowding of existing emergency waiting rooms in surrounding hospitals.

## TORONTO BEACHES LIONS EASTER PARADE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I rise today to talk about the largest Easter parade in Canada: the Beaches Easter

Parade. Now in its 46th year, it is put on by the Toronto Beaches Lions Club, and it is a wonderful, absolutely stupendous, day. People come from all over. We have antique streetcars, marching bands, floats, politicians, and candies given out to the kids. Clowns are walking up and down. Of course, the highlight of the day is the Easter bunny.

The Beaches parade starts at Neville Park, which is at the eastern end of the streetcar line, and goes all the way to Woodbine. It starts at 2 o'clock. The parade itself lasts about an hour and a half to two hours. We're hoping that families will come out to enjoy the day.

Even better: Come out early and discover the beach and one of the fine restaurants for lunch. Or, if you prefer, come just in time for the parade and stay after for dinner. We welcome everybody to come out and enjoy a truly, truly magnificent day in one of the finest areas of the city of Toronto and one of the best shopping areas in all of Toronto. While you're there, please look at the children and see what they're doing. Witness the magic through a child's eyes.

## PARKINSON'S AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** April is Parkinson's Awareness Month. Parkinson's disease is a chronic, progressive and increasingly disabling movement disorder that affects more than 40,000 Ontarians in every community in our province. One of the challenges that families face is to help their loved one overcome the social withdrawal that comes from not wanting others to see their hands shake. On bad days, even picking up a cup of tea is difficult.

Despite the desire of the Parkinson's patient to sleep a lot, research shows that physical activity improves strength, flexibility, balance and overall health for people with Parkinson's.

Parkinson's patients do not know whether, on any given day, they can even put on their wristwatch without help. They rely on their families to assist with the complex drug regimen and, when they can't go out, to bring the things to them that a Parkinson's patient loves to do.

During the past 30 years, the Parkinson's Society of Canada has funded more than \$19.5 million in Parkinson's research, granting 385 fellowships, grants and new investigator awards.

This year's Parkinson's Awareness Month theme is "Get Ready, Get Set, Get Moving." We need to help those with Parkinson's disease keep active, even as we keep fighting for treatments and hopefully for a cure.

## LEEDS-GRENVILLE ARTS AND CULTURE

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise today to tell everyone in the province about something amazing that's just waiting to be discovered in the riding of Leeds-Grenville.

## 1510

Over the weekend, I had the opportunity to attend the gala opening of the Creative Journeys exhibit at the Marianne van Silfhout Gallery on the campus of St. Lawrence College in Brockville. I want to thank Connie Porteous, one of the second-year students, whose incredible and diverse artistic talents are on display at the show, for personally inviting me.

Beyond seeing the beautiful and powerful works of art, the gala was a great opportunity for me to meet these impressive young artists and speak to them about their work, their inspirations and their big dreams for the future.

I mentioned that there's something amazing happening in Leeds—Grenville. I'm speaking of the vibrant arts and culture community that has been cultivated in municipalities right across the riding. It's not just in Brockville, where, in particular, St. Lawrence College Fine Arts and Music Theatre performance programs have added so much to the already vibrant cultural fabric of Ontario. You'll also discover it in the world-class performances on stage at the Thousand Islands Playhouse in Gananoque and the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival in Prescott. Take a tour through the scenic countryside of Westport, Rideau Lakes and Merrickville to explore the natural beauty that inspires the many renowned artists whose studios dot the landscape.

Whether your destination is North Grenville, Athens, the shores of the St. Lawrence River in the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, or anywhere in between, I encourage lovers of the arts to visit Leeds—Grenville this year. It's an experience you won't soon forget.

#### OAKVILLE AWARDS FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature this afternoon and congratulate the winners of the Oakville Awards for Business Excellence. These awards are hosted annually by the Rotary Club of Oakville West, along with the Oakville Chamber of Commerce.

I'd like to congratulate the Wine Ladies—Georgia Mense-Chase and Susanne Seelig-Mense—who are the winners of the Entrepreneur of the Year; Linda Belanger and Winsor Macdonell from Genworth Financial Canada—the Community Builder of the Year; Large Company of the Year went to Adam Cruickshank and Fourmark Manufacturing; Christina Anderson and Homewood Suites by Hilton were awarded the Restaurant/Hospitality/Tourism Provider of the Year; Dan Welland from Factory Tile Depot won Small Company of the Year honours; and Kristin and David Courtney from MEDiChair Halton were recognized as the Professional Service Provider of the Year.

Also, I think it's great to add that the night raised more than \$40,000 for a number of the great Rotary youth and

academic programs that are made available in the community and internationally.

My congratulations and those of all my colleagues go out to the winners and to all those who were nominated for the awards in the first place.

I'd also like to thank the sponsors and, once again, the Rotary Club of Oakville West and the Oakville Chamber of Commerce for this fantastic event that they host every year in the great community of Oakville.

#### MINOR HOCKEY

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** I rise today to pay tribute to the hard work and skill demonstrated by the young members of the hockey team in Quinte West. The Scaletta Group Novice A Hawks, a group of seven-to-nine-year-old players, won the Ontario Minor Hockey Association title in a real cliffhanger by winning the best-of-seven series with a dramatic game 7 win over the Belleville Junior Bulls.

Led by their captain, Zack Brooks, who scored an impressive 134 goals this year, the most ever scored by a Trenton rep hockey player, the members of the victorious team were Caden Deery, Brody Brooks, Lucas Belej, Gavin Camp, Andrew DiCresce, Tyler Gauvin, Evan Jerrett, Matthew Lombardi, Ethan Scaletta, Brock Sallans, Connor St. Pierre, Ashley Taylor and Kendrick Webster.

Top-notch coaching was provided by Bevet Horner, Ian Brooks and Scott Scaletta. Their trainer was Joey Scott, and the proud team manager was Joseph DiCresce.

To all the team members and the coaching staff, I'd like to offer my sincere congratulations to the Hawks for their splendid victory.

Let me just say to all NHL scouts who are watching this broadcast to keep an eye on Quinte West in the years to come if they're looking for the next Sidney Crosby.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Don't you mean Gretzky? Thank you.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT (ELECTION OF CHAIR OF YORK REGION), 2012 LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS (ÉLECTION DU PRÉSIDENT DE LA RÉGION DE YORK)

**Mr. Moridi** moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 60, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 to provide that the head of council for The Regional Municipality of York must be elected / Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités pour prévoir que le président du conseil de la municipalité régionale de York doit être élu.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Municipal Act, 2001, is amended to provide that the head of council of the regional municipality of York must be elected and may not be appointed.

## PETITIONS

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm on the ball today, I can tell you that. I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments"—the municipalities—"to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries" and other areas; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium" immediately "on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt" and provincially significant wetlands, specifically in my riding in the area of Durham, but indeed across the province of Ontario.

I'm pleased to sign in support of this and give it to Asha, one of the pages here.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I have a petition here on behalf of a lot of people from all over Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets at Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately."

I wholeheartedly agree, add my signature and would like to give it to Lauren.

### CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Speaker, I've got a petition signed by some residents in my community. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the operation of cellular commercial transmission equipment on new or existing cell towers has been proposed near residential areas in Oakville and other communities around the province; and

"Whereas Industry Canada has ultimate authority to approve the location of cellular communications transmission equipment under the federal Radiocommunication Act; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario has no jurisdiction in the placement of cell communications, equipment or services; and

"Whereas many area residents and local elected officials have expressed concerns with the location due to its proximity to residential areas"—it goes on, Speaker:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada review the siting of cellular commercial communications transmission equipment in residential areas; and

"That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada place a moratorium on the installation of cellular commercial communication transmission equipment on new or existing towers within 1,000 metres of residential homes until an improved separation distance is established by the federal government."

Speaker, I agree with this. I'd sign it if I could. I'm going to send it down with Aylin.

1520

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I rise to read a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas on April 22, 2002, Premier Dalton McGuinty signed a pledge in North Bay to never privatize the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission; and

"Whereas high energy prices have forced northern Ontario businesses to close or move, including Xstrata, which had moved its Timmins smelter operations to Quebec and made up 10% of Ontario Northland railway's business; and

"Whereas some 60 lumber mills have closed across northern Ontario in recent years with a loss of 10,000 resource jobs, and Ontario fell from being the number one mining jurisdiction in the world to number 23" primarily "due to high taxes and government red tape, resulting in the erosion of Ontario Northland's commercial customer base; and

"Whereas the Far North Act that has banned development and turned much of northern Ontario into a virtual museum is the biggest barrier to new job creation in northern Ontario and cost Ontario Northland business; and

"Whereas the ONTC was completely omitted from the province's northern growth plan issued two years ago; and

"Whereas the former MPP for Nipissing" held "an election campaign announcement on September 30, 2011, regarding what is now known to be a non-existent strategic alliance between the ONTC and Metrolinx; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario on March 23, 2012, announced it would wind down and divest itself of the ONTC and its assets with no prior consultation with community stakeholders in Nipissing and across north-eastern Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, hereby" ask the Premier to explain his decision.

I approve of this and sign this petition.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Once again, I'm presenting over 1,600 petitions. They're coming in by the thousands.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect

the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I agree with this, Speaker. I'm putting my name to it, and Kyle will be bringing it down.

### CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I'd like to especially thank Beverly and Ted Taylor of Ridgeside Lane in Oakville for having submitted it. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the operation of cellular commercial transmission equipment on new or existing cell towers has been proposed near residential areas in Oakville and other communities around the province;

"Whereas Industry Canada has ultimate authority to approve the location of cellular communications transmission equipment under the federal Radiocommunication Act;

"Whereas the province of Ontario has no jurisdiction in the placement of cell communications equipment or services;

"Whereas many area residents and local elected officials have expressed concerns with the location due to its proximity to residential areas;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada review the siting of cellular commercial communications transmission equipment in residential areas; and

"That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada place a moratorium on the installation of cellular commercial communication transmission equipment on new or existing towers within 1,000 metres of residential homes until an improved separation distance is established by the federal government."

Speaker, I am pleased to sign this petition and to send it down with page Felix.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values; and

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent ... study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I affix my name to this petition.



## EASTERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It comes from Ottawa-Orléans and the parents of Avalon Public School.

"Whereas the community of Orléans will be hit hard"—I'm sorry, I have the wrong one in my hand, Speaker. I'll have to start over.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:" This comes from the people in Orléans who are concerned with the movement of federal jobs from Orléans.

"Whereas the community of Orléans will be hit hard with the movement of 10,000 jobs from downtown to Kanata;

"Whereas the move of employment away from the east end will force many residents to move to the Kanata area and property values that have already fallen about 5% will fall further;

"Whereas the eastern Ontario development fund is designed to help businesses create new jobs and invest in new technologies, equipment and skills training;

"Whereas another goal of the eastern Ontario development fund is to support economic development projects that will attract or retain investment in Ontario-based industries and communities; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has pledged to continue the EODF past its original four-year mandate;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that the Legislature ensure that the eastern Ontario development fund extends to the geographic area including Orléans to assist job growth in the face of a federal decision to dramatically affect the sustainability of areas east of the downtown core of Ottawa, including Orléans."

I agree with this petition and sign it and I send it forward with Seph.

## HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I will affix my name and send it.

## SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have a petition from my residents of York South-Weston in regards to St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston.

"Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

"Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

"Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and send it over with Emma.

## CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It won't be any surprise that literally thousands and thousands of people in Huron-Bruce, after last week's announcements, are putting their signature to petitions, and today I present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

1530

"Whereas the closure of the Bluewater Youth Centre will have a negative economic impact on Goderich and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas there is a need to deal with overcrowding in the Ontario correctional system; and

"Whereas the federal Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act, will increase the population in the Ontario correctional system over the next four years; and

"Whereas the Bluewater Youth Centre would need very little retrofitting and the staff would need minimal retraining to open as a medium-secure correctional facility which could hold more than 200 beds required by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services; and

"Whereas specialized treatment programs within the correctional system such as drug treatment, mental health issues," for example, "could be offered with the skilled support staff currently in place; and

"Whereas we believe that this is the most economical way to add ... 200 beds to the Ontario correctional system, as the building is in place and staff are currently hired to run such a facility;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government engage in meaningful community and employee consultation in order to find alternate uses within the youth services or correctional services system for this facility, thereby preventing job losses and economic hardship for an area already badly impacted by plant closures and tornado damage."

I totally agree with this petition, I affix my signature and I'll give it to Emily.

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas everyone agrees that Ontarians should have access to healthy, clean drinking water from a secure source;

"Whereas, under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario regulation 319/08, public health inspectors are required to undertake risk assessments of small drinking water systems;

"Whereas many of these small drinking water systems are located in small businesses, Royal Canadian Legion halls, churches and other community facilities in rural Ontario with neither the budget to pay for the expensive testing required nor the volunteers to transport water samples to provincially accredited laboratories in urban centres hours away; and

"Whereas the history of test results at a small drinking water system location is only a small factor in the risk assessment, to the point where sites with a decade or more of clean test results may still be required to conduct monthly or weekly testing;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health amend Ontario regulation 319/08 to give the testing track record of a small drinking water system greater weight in the risk assessment process."

I agree with the petition and will affix my signature, and I'll send it to the table with page Abigail.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE ACT (EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT), 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 SUR LE CONGÉ FAMILIAL POUR LES AIDANTS NATURELS (MODIFICATION DES NORMES D'EMPLOI)

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 22, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave / Projet de loi 30, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé familial pour les aidants naturels.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Algoma-Manitoulin has the floor.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thank you, Speaker. I'll be splitting the time with my colleague from Bramalea-Mississauga.

Je voulais seulement terminer ce que j'avais commencé à dire au sujet de cette proposition. C'est que l'idée en arrière du budget, oui, ça aide. Et puis, oui, essentiellement, ça ne serait pas une méchante idée qu'on partage l'aide qui est nécessaire, mais ça n'adresse pas le gros besoin dans ce domaine, et puis c'est ça qui est vraiment concernant sur le sujet.

Si on regarde le projet de loi comme il est écrit, ça aide un petit peu. Ça ôte le mal un petit peu. Mais vraiment, ça n'adresse pas les besoins qui ont été identifiés par plusieurs personnes dans les communautés.

Il faudrait vraiment qu'on envisage ce bill-ci pour que ça aide plus, pour qu'il y ait plus de personnes à la table et pour que l'on puisse partager la nécessité et puis le besoin pour tout le monde dans notre communauté.

Avec cela, madame, je vais transférer mon temps à mon ami, et puis M. Jagmeet Singh va continuer.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm happy to join the debate on this G30, the Family Caregiver Leave Act, and I'm happy to add my voice to some of the concerns that were raised.

To begin with, I think this is a positive initiative. It addresses those individuals who want to take a leave to take care of or to provide necessary care for their family while there is a serious medical condition. So, off the bat, that's a very important step to take.

One of the concerns that has come up, though, is that when we have this type of leave given, we have to ensure that people are aware of their rights. There are many opportunities and many areas where employees don't know what their rights are and what they can access, what they can do and what they can't do, so it's very important that while we provide this ability for people to take this leave, we should also ensure that this is disseminated so that people are aware of their rights.

The other concern that's raised is that while we are giving people the opportunity to take time to care for their family, to leave their employment for that purpose, it's very difficult to take any substantial leave from work if there's no income supplement. So, while it's a positive step, it's concerning that there isn't that support. I would call on the government and call on my colleagues to ensure that there is an additional level of support, that perhaps we speak with and negotiate with the federal government to ensure that EI would be expanded to address this and provide some additional supplements to those who are taking this leave.



*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** That would be great.

There are a number of colleagues we can speak to from the federal caucus perhaps. I implore all colleagues to address their local federal MP on this issue.

There are a number of other leaves that are already in existence in Ontario. There is pregnancy leave, parental leave, organ donor leave, personal emergency leave and declared emergency leave. So this rounds out the opportunities given for family members to take that time out and address the concerns that their family members may have when they're ill.

We've contacted stakeholders who are certainly in support of this initiative.

Let's talk about some of the real needs, some of the real stories to capture the essence of why this bill is important—if we look at, for example, a 49-year-old mother, and she's in need of long-term care, and this mother cannot be cared for at home unless she has support from her family. If we have, for example, a wife who has had a heart attack and her husband also had a stroke, we have a husband and a wife who are in a particular circumstance where they're both unable to care for each other. In that circumstance, we need another family member to step in.

These are real stories; people experience this all the time. These are heartbreaking stories. Situations that are already quite difficult become even worse when people can't take the time out to care for their families. It's definitely an important initiative, and there are real faces to these stories.

Again, let's look at some of the realities. What individual would be able to take two months off without a paycheck? Madam Speaker, the likelihood of that happening is very low, particularly given the economic circumstances that we have right now in Ontario. I would be hard-pressed to think of any example of very many families where they could take that much time off work. Again, it is important, but we have to look at the reality of, how many families can really take that time off?

There is also an additional factor to weigh in. When we look at the idea of supplementing the income of those people who wish to take advantage of this leave, there is a cost-cutting benefit to the fact that we have family members who are willing to care for their ill or unwell family. If they're able to do that, it takes a burden off of the health care system. So it provides a cost-cutting as well.

1540

For example, if we have a family member who's willing to take the time off from work and wants to care for his or her unwell or ill family member, that's care that could be at a hospital. That's care that's a cost-cutting in terms of not putting that burden on a hospital, not putting that burden on the health care system in general and allowing that individual to stay in their own home. So we give greater dignity to the life of an individual who wants to stay in their own home. We also provide a cost savings for the hospital or the health care provider who doesn't

have to spend that money on caring for that individual, and the family member is able to do it.

In addition, there's also a certain value that can't be quantified with respect to having your own family member care for you as opposed to someone else. So there's a certain advantage of having someone you know well, someone who you know loves and cares for you, providing you with that one-on-one care as opposed to relying on the health care system; though sometimes there's a necessity where there's an acute illness, where there are some special needs that only a qualified medical professional can provide. In those circumstances where we don't, this leave will provide an alternative to relying on the standard services from a hospital or from a medical health care provider.

If we factor this cost savings in, it's another argument that militates in favour of providing an income supplement of some sort. So I come back to the reality that, though it's a good initiative, let's look at some alternatives to provide some real incentive or some real support for those people who do take advantage of this leave and provide them with some income supplements so that they can actually provide the care but also have the financial resources to actually take that time off from work. If you look at the bill, it provides an unpaid job-protected leave of absence and gives them an opportunity to provide care or support for certain family members who have a serious medical condition.

The other issue that comes in is this protected leave of absence. While someone is taking that leave of absence, we have to ensure that both the employee and the employer are aware of this law so that an employee who wants to take advantage of the leave is not faced with any reprisal from the employer. We have to ensure that there are checks and balances in place so that an employee who does take this leave doesn't come back to the job and then find that their position is no longer available or they have to complete or conduct or perform duties that they weren't initially trained for, or they preferred a certain area and they enjoyed that area, and now because they've taken this leave they're no longer able to do that. We need to ensure that there's some protection in place so that employees do not face any negative repercussions if they take part in this leave. That comes down to ensuring that we have adequate enforcement of employment standards, and it also requires that we have proper education in terms of employees and employers both knowing what their rights are and what their obligations and their duties are.

It speaks to a larger picture of employment standards in general and the fact that, in Ontario, we have worked hard to create a climate where workers are protected. There is still a lot of work that remains to be done and some areas that require greater work and greater attention, particularly the enforcement aspect. I think that's something that we can work towards: ensuring that we have more qualified and more personnel in general so that we can enforce employment standards in the workplace, and that would include ensuring that employees

don't suffer repercussions from engaging in or participating in or accessing this leave. But in all areas of employment, we need to ensure that employees are protected and that their workplaces are safe. That would require us taking a look at the regulations and the oversight and the enforcement of employment standards.

So when we discuss any of the proposals that come before this House, there's a law that addresses one area, but the reality is that there is a bigger picture. In this context, when we're looking at the Family Caregiver Leave Act, it also requires us to look at employment standards generally; it also requires us to look at employment oversight and enforcement. So that requires us to give some consideration to the steps that we're taking as a province to ensure that our workers are taken care of, that our workers have a safe environment, and that these laws are implemented in a manner in which the employee and the employer are both aware of what their rights and obligations are and that there is some protection for an employee who does wish to take part in this leave.

Again, I think it's a great step, a great initiative. There are a couple of areas which have not been addressed by the bill, and I think we should look at that in terms of accessing some income supplements as well as ensuring that both the employee and the employer know what their rights are.

Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I want to thank the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton for his comments and his suggestions to the bill. It seems evident that he understands that this bill would allow those facing difficult family situations time off work in the comfort of knowing that their jobs are secure.

I wanted to address a couple of points that he made during his speech. The first one is, he was wondering if we intend to ask the federal government to extend employment insurance, and, yes, the government does intend, the ministry intends, to ask the federal government to extend employment insurance to those who would take this new family caregiver leave—if the bill is passed, obviously.

The other point that I wanted to address is, he asked how many people, how many families, can afford to take the time off. I just wanted to make sure to clarify that an employee can take up to eight weeks but could take simply one week, two weeks, whatever is needed in the specific case. It doesn't have to be the whole eight weeks. It's a leave of absence according to the time that is needed at that time.

The proposed leave would apply to all employees who are covered by the ESA, the Employment Standards Act, whether they're full-time, whether they're part-time, permanent or term contract. So again, there's no requirement that an employee be employed for a particular length of time as well. There's no minimum there, so the bill would foresee that as well.

I want to thank him for his comments and look forward to hearing more.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton is clearly a very well-spoken advocate type. As a trained lawyer and as an NDP member, he speaks with some authority and an informed vision.

Our position on this is, who could be against doing the right thing, except Dalton McGuinty? He's got this thing structured in such a way that it's ham-fisted. If you look at it, first of all, you have to take a week at a time. If you're the person that wants to take time off to bring your mother or father or other significant person to an appointment, for instance, you may have to take a Monday off, or a Friday. No, you have to take the whole week.

Not only that, but there's not one cent in this bill to help the working poor in Ontario. It's really discouraging when I look at it. It's chalked up that you must have a note from the doctor that the significant other is going to die imminently. Well, what doctor is going to say that? They are there to save your life.

This bill is structured like all the bills. It's got a trap door in it, unfortunately. When you walk in, you think you're safe. Watch out, because to me—our leader, Tim Hudak, has made it very clear: It's about jobs and the economy. The best help for families in this situation is to get them a decent job. These people can take up to 13 weeks off with no pay. Welcome to Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Then they're blaming Stephen Harper for not extending the 13 weeks in unemployment insurance benefits. But if you look at the law federally, there are already provisions for family leave within the Employment Standards Act, as well as the federal laws on employment as well.

1550

So I think this is a shell. It's like one of those Russian dolls that you open up and there's another one inside and another one, and when you get to the bottom, there's nothing. That's what it's like.

Unfortunately, I'll be supporting it because it's—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's my pleasure to give my remarks mainly on the remarks from the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton. I would agree that this is a positive initiative, but it's a very small positive initiative.

I would like to also comment on the member from York South-Weston. While we don't have to take the whole eight weeks, we can just take a week, quite frankly, if a family—and it's the family caregiver leave. What I'm most concerned with is a lot of families, specifically in my riding, are low-income families, and whether it's one week or two weeks—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Where's the money?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes. That's part of the problem. It's easy for us to discuss that here and I think we would all like to improve this to actually—I like the idea of getting unemployment insurance. But once again, that doesn't help everyone.



It bothers us a little bit when you introduce a bill that depends on another government to provide the money. I really don't know if that's—once again, we are in favour of this bill going forward. Who would vote against a bill like this? But there are going to be people who will not be able—the people who really need it—the people who can afford to take the time off aren't the ones who really need the help. That's where we're having a big problem with this bill. Somehow we have to get around that, that the people—and I'm going to repeat it again, because it's the most important thing: The people who really need this bill, the way this bill is structured, can't afford to access it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd first like to begin by thanking the member from York South–Weston, the member from Durham and my own colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane for adding their voices and for speaking on the bill as well, and responding to some of my comments.

I thank the member for York South–Weston for addressing some of those concerns with respect to how long, that you're not limited by the—you don't have to take the full eight weeks. I appreciate that.

I also echo some of the concerns raised by the member for Durham: that weekly requirement, having to take a week's slot at a time. We may need to address that in committee. Some greater flexibility may be required. It might address some of the concerns that we've raised, that the realities of life, given the fact that people may not be able to take a full week off economically or financially—they may be able to take a day or two off, and that's an option that might assist.

I think the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane echoed my concerns very well and we're obviously on the same page with respect to the most vulnerable people in society—those who really need this leave. The members of society who would want to take part in this are the ones who are in the worst position to take part in it because they could not afford to not have an income supplement.

I agree that we could look at having the federal government expand EI, but again, it's problematic when we're relying on another source of funding that's not within our control, that's not within our ambit, that's not within our ability to control, essentially.

So I think we have to look at our own coffers to see if we can access some funds, if we can look at some of the suggestions, perhaps, that our leader Andrea Horwath has presented and find some funding so that we can actually assist those families who are hardest off and provide them with a mechanism so that they can actually access this leave.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** First of all, I'd like to apologize for missing the opportunity for one more speaker. I certainly hope that that will be accommodated as we move along this afternoon.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been

six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Madam Speaker, we would like debate to continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further debate? The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and—  
*Applause.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you for that round of applause. I'm going to share my time with the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

We're here today speaking of the Family Caregiver Leave Act, Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave. As someone who spent more than 20 years in the health care profession as a nurse and probably over three decades of looking after family members—because that kind of goes along with being a nurse in your family; you're the one tagged with the health care—you can certainly see the impact that a debilitating disease or a sudden current illness has on families. Such illnesses, especially when they involve an elderly parent or child, are certainly heartbreaking and the family do need that time and opportunity to care for their loved ones.

But I must say that I really don't see how this bill fills a unique need that is not already addressed elsewhere in the current Employment Standards Act, and the third party mentioned this a few times too, in their remarks just previously, since the government decided not to participate in the rotation for some reason.

Anyway, the family medical leave provision, which is detailed in item 49.1 of the Employment Standards Act—a little technical, but I want to get it out there—provides for up to eight weeks of unpaid leave on compassionate grounds when a family member is diagnosed by a qualified health practitioner as likely to pass away within 26 weeks. I realize that there is always some subjectivity when health care professionals offer a prognosis. However, the act tries to be very specific in this regard as to when the leave would be applicable. And the act clearly specifies which distressed family members would qualify an employee for being granted family medical leave.

With regard to this leave, the federal government committed to supporting the individual with up to six weeks of employment insurance benefits, which is what was previously discussed. Also, they need some employment insurance; they need some money to be able to take that leave. So that's already in the existing Employment Standards Act. It's just reality; you have bills to pay but you need to take care of your family member. You have to have some type of compensation to enable you to do that.

Another provision in the Employment Standards Act which details the granting of unpaid leave is the personal emergency leave, which is detailed in item 50. So a lot of

these things that the act presently before us is supposed to do already exist.

I haven't got anybody phoning my office saying we need to change the family caregivers leave that's in the Employment Standards Act; they're not calling. They're calling about the scandals that exist with this government, especially in respect to Ornge and why this government is not taking responsibility at an earlier date but not even having responsibility now. We in the opposition have been calling for a select committee.

Madam Speaker, based on that, I have nothing else to really do but use the tools that are [*inaudible*] to us in the Legislature and call for an adjournment of the debate until there's a select committee on Ornge established.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Ms. Scott has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1559 to 1629.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Ms. Scott has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour, please rise until counted.

All those opposed, please rise until counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 22; the nays are 42.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to rejoin the debate. I'm a little disappointed that we weren't successful in getting the select committee on Ornge, but it's okay—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** But the minister promised we'd have—

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** They did promise.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'll resume debate on Bill 30, which is the Family Caregiver Leave Act, which I have said really doesn't do anything that doesn't exist, that people aren't already using, which I think is very indicative of what this government is about. Donald Drummond really didn't recommend that this act needed to be changed. It wasn't one of the top priorities. But, oh yes, you guys are ignoring that report, aren't you? So it really doesn't matter.

In fact, this government is very good at giving the perception of activity, which again we're witnessing over here—the work of an illusionist. This government, shrouded in smoke and mirrors, not only on the health file but on this—on the Premier's office door, I half expect to see a disclaimer that says, "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain." Really, Madam Speaker, that is kind of what you're getting from this government: bringing in acts that don't make any sense.

People in my riding are worried about services in health care, getting more services. They can't get labs in their own community; they have to travel. So when they see Ornge and the expenditure in health care, the wasted millions of dollars—we want to get to the bottom of that, because health care dollars need to be spent where they should be spent and not wasted on scandals like Ornge. So I call for adjournment of the House, Madam Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order. Ms. Scott has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1633 to 1703.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I would ask all members to take their seats. Order.

Ms. Scott has moved adjournment of the House.

All in favour, please rise until counted.

All right; sit down.

All those opposed, please rise until counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 24; the nays are 43.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

Further debate? The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave. This bill was introduced on December 8, 2011, and it's very important to debate this bill.

I have several concerns with this bill. I am concerned with the limited consultations that the ministry has done in drafting this legislation. You would think that there would be detailed consultations with employees, small businesses, those in the health care field and many corporations across the province of Ontario. There was a real lack of this on behalf of the ministry—to consult the industry at all.

According to ministry personnel, they have little or no evidence that there are people being denied time off from their employment to provide care for their loved ones. The Ministry of Labour staff also said that there hasn't been any significant demand for this legislation.

Speaker, let me remind you that we are staring directly in the face of a \$30-billion deficit. We have 600,000 men and women out of work, and we have billion-dollar scandals like Ornge unfolding daily. We need a select committee on Ornge, something that the minister herself agreed to if the will of the Legislature supported it.

Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."



In my opinion, the nays have it.  
Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.  
*The division bells rang from 1706 to 1736.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask all members to take their seats.

Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour, please rise until counted.  
All those opposed, please rise until counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):**  
The ayes are 21; the nays are 37.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

The member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you, Speaker. As critic of economic development and innovation, I find it shocking that this government would introduce a bill that not only, not just by itself—but approaches the suggestion that Ontario employers and job creators are somehow taking advantage of their own staff by denying them job-protected employment.

As the members on this side of the House know, this is the most scandal-plagued government in the history of the province of Ontario. I was here as a page in 1991, when Bob Rae had a deficit of \$10 billion. That was nothing compared to the deficit that Dalton McGuinty has Ontario in: a made-in-Ontario \$30-billion deficit.

Speaker, 600,000 people in the province of Ontario are unemployed, thanks to Dalton McGuinty and his govern-

ment. This government is a government full of billion-dollar boondoggles. We have eHealth, we have the Mississauga gas plant, we have the Oakville gas plant, and we have Ornge.

Speaker, we need a select committee on Ornge.

I move for adjournment of the House.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order. Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1740 to 1810.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the House.

All in favour, please rise until counted.

All opposed, please rise until you're counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):**  
The ayes are 49; the nays are 1.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1811.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
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Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craiton, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
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Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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<b>Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
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Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
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Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward—Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
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Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	
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Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan  
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Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod  
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Toby Barrett, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh  
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Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch







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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 4 April 2012

Mercredi 4 avril 2012



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** May we all pray, please.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Good morning, Speaker, and good morning to everyone here on such a beautiful, sunny day like this morning. It's my pleasure to ask that government order G13 be called at this time.

## ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

### LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 3, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important bill, Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters. The short title of this bill, Speaker, is the Accepting Schools Act, and that is how I will be referring to this particular bill.

Speaker, this is my second term in this great Legislature. It's five years that I've been serving the people of Ontario, and particularly the people of Ottawa Centre, and I would argue that at least in my short time in this Legislature, of all the laws, bills and issues we have debated and discussed, this particular matter, this particular bill, is by far the most important one that I have been engaged in. This bill represents hope. It represents hope for thousands and thousands of children and young people in this great province of ours. This particular bill represents hope for those children and young people who are in our schools and are bullied on a daily basis. This bill represents hope for those adults who have been victims of bullies and are out of our school system now but still carry the scars of bullying. Some of them have the courage to come out and speak against bullying, share their stories and try to inspire others so they can also continue with their lives, and some don't.

Speaker, this bill is hope for parents, for members of families whose children are bullied—and there are, un-

fortunately, many in our province—especially those parents who have lost a child of theirs, a child who took his or her own life because of bullying. They will all agree, unfortunately, that there have been too many in our province.

Therefore, it is incumbent on us—no ifs and buts about this—that we need to deal with the issue of bullying in our province, and we need to have an action plan on this very important issue now. This is not a matter for the future. This is not an issue we should delay our action on, because our duty and responsibility as members of this Legislative Assembly, our fiduciary duty to the people of Ontario, especially to the children and young people of this great province, requires that we deal with the issue around bullying now.

I think I stand in very good company. All members of this Legislature recognize how important it is that we have strict laws, that we have an action plan in place now dealing with bullies. More importantly than the 107 of us who are elected, the people out there, the members of our community, the people of Ontario are demanding of us that we have an action plan, that we have policies, that we have laws now that deal with bullying. So the stars are aligned. We are all on the same page. Now what we need to agree on is that action plan. What we need to agree on is our resolve, our will to take action, and that's what leadership is about. That's the kind of leadership all of us have to demonstrate by working together.

Speaker, my riding of Ottawa Centre is a diverse riding. It's a riding made up of many, many communities. It's a riding made up of young and old, a riding made up of people who have lived in that community for a long, long time and those who just arrived in Ottawa yesterday. We are blessed to have a very diverse community that we call Ottawa, and particularly Ottawa Centre.

I also have a very diverse community in terms of a large LGBT—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered—community that lives in Ottawa Centre, a community that is extremely active in not only promoting the well-being of members of the LGBT community, especially youth, but also the community at large, which is active in our schools, which is active in our neighbourhoods, to ensure that we live in a vibrant place. Collectively, we all work together to ensure that our community, our neighbourhoods are safe places to live.

When I'm out there and talking to them about Bill 13, they want action on Bill 13 now. They are very supportive of Bill 13 and what it stands for. What does Bill 13 stand for, Speaker? I think the preamble language in Bill 13 is quite instructive. It states that the people of Ontario



and the Legislative Assembly believe that all students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability. All important differences are listed within the language of this bill, differences that don't just need to be tolerated; differences that need to be accepted and, in fact, celebrated.

0910

The bill goes further and says that the people of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly believe that a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment where all students feel accepted is a necessary condition for student success—because that is what we want for our children: no matter who they are, no matter what family they come from, that they are successful in school and they are given equal opportunity to thrive.

The bill goes on to say further—and I 100% wholeheartedly agree with that statement, and I think the people of Ontario accept that as well—that students need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to engage the world and others critically, which means developing a critical consciousness that allows them to take action on making their schools and communities more equitable and inclusive for all people, including LGBTTIQ—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, two-spirited, intersex, queer and questioning people.

This is the right set of policies that we are putting forward. We need to make sure that we address the root causes of bullying that takes place in our schools. Kids are getting picked on because they may be LGBT; they may be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered. They may be getting picked on because they're kids of dad and dad, or mom and mom. There is no reason that that should take place in our schools.

I urge all members to please vote in support of this bill. We need to work at bringing Bill 13 and 14 together so it is law before this September, so that we can start addressing issues around bullying in an effective, forceful manner, starting the new school year. This is a great opportunity for us to demonstrate to the world outside that we do have the capacity to work together and make Ontario a better place for our students.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Ottawa Centre spoke with passion, representative of what Dalton McGuinty told him to say—which is fine.

What I'm going to do here is basically, I'm going to put on the table something that's important. Just in the media today—it's very good—it says:

"The way to fight bullying is to have school boards, bureaucrats, principals and teachers committed to ending it.

"It's to make it clear to kids from the first day of school that no one has the right to bully them for any

reason and that if they are being bullied, the adults in charge of the school will help them.

"Then, that promise has to be backed up with real action.

"None of this will happen as long as we're caught in an ideologically-driven sideshow over one form of bullying based on sexual orientation" versus others.

There should be no hierarchy of bullying—no bullying is tolerated—and that distraction is really what's causing the problem. Bill 14, which we unanimously agreed, I think, puts a more mature look at the whole issue.

This article I'm reading and will refer to says, "First, bullying permeates both public and separate schools.

"Second, kids get bullied for all sorts of reasons, including but not limited to sexual orientation." None of it's acceptable.

"Third, the real problem has been the tendency of school boards, bureaucrats and administrators to ignore bullying, to refuse to back up teachers trying to combat it and to re-victimize the victims of bullying by transferring them to other schools" instead of dealing with it.

We need leadership on the issue. We need clear rules that aren't creating a hierarchy of one form of bullying versus another. No form of bullying is acceptable in Ontario or Canada, or for that matter the world. And I can tell you first-hand, I'm dealing with constituents now who have been bullied, not for any particular reason that I would disclose here, but it was not dealt with properly and indeed the child was transferred. In fact, the child becomes re-victimized. This bill simply doesn't do it. Look at Bill 14. Look at serving the children, not some other ideology.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Questions and comments.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to take this time to introduce you to a fabulous, young little girl from Bruce Mines. Her name is Candace. You know, there were a lot of signs that were there. First, she was a bubbly young person, very athletic, was very active in her community. Nobody would have thought that the outcome that she chose was the outcome that happened. The unfortunate part? She couldn't talk to anybody. She didn't have that avenue. She didn't have that organization. She didn't know who she could go to. And unfortunately she took her life. She made a drastic decision because those resources weren't there; or if they were, they were hidden; or if they would have been, she didn't know where to go to get them. It's unfortunate now that all the signs were there but nobody recognized them.

There's a lot of good in Bill 13. There's a lot of good in Bill 14. We need to take some action—yes. We need to take the right steps—yes, we do. But we need to do this in a way that will serve all Ontarians. Let's put the flags down. Let's get this right, let's get the discussions going, but let's say no to a lot of what we're seeing—or a lot of what I'm seeing—as far as positions that we're taking on either/or. They're both good. Let's move them forward. Let's get this right. I think we owe that to our

kids, we owe that to our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Questions, comments.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'm very pleased to speak on this bill, and it's unfortunate that a bill like this and Bill 14 have sort of become very partisan issues because they really shouldn't be. I think all of us remember either having been bullied, particularly during our formative years in schools, or seeing bullies operate in those schools, and there have been some lasting effects of that.

What I would strongly suggest to the process here is that we take the best aspects of this bill and the best aspects of Bill 14 and come up with a law that is a non-partisan law. A lot has been said about sexual orientation, and that's only one kind of bullying.

I have sort of been thinking about how some organizations—mainly, the separate system doesn't want to have the committees called one thing or another. Now, I'll tell you I've been a separate school supporter my entire life. Quite frankly, I can't see it. Kids in their schools are going to call the committees whatever the heck they want to call them, and just because adults say you've got to call it this, you've got to call it that, okay, that may be the official name, but they're going to call it whatever they want, and that's the reality of the situation. Let's deal with the real issue here so that people aren't stigmatized, so that people don't suffer the consequences of this for the rest of their life, or as the member from Algoma just mentioned, some very dramatic situations happened with respect to the young girl that he talked about who in effect took her own life.

0920

This should not be a partisan issue. There are good points in both of the bills, and the only way we're going to make a real difference in the schools is by allowing the kids to basically decide what to call the committees that they want to form. This is a good idea. This is one way in which we can all collectively do something about the bullying situation in our schools.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** As a high school teacher, an educator, a parent and just an individual who cares for his community, province and country, and for everyone from all walks of life regardless, I think the member from Durham made a very good point: Bullying is wrong, regardless of sex, gender, religion, creed—it doesn't matter; it's wrong, period. Intolerance—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Sexual orientation.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** Sexual orientation—it's wrong, right?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** See? That didn't hurt.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** No, it didn't hurt. And intolerance for diversity is wrong, period.

We have to remember that we're dealing with human beings. Bullying is something that has been around for thousands of years. We try to legislate it. We try to improve upon it. We're educating our youth toward the

tolerance of others and their beliefs. This is important. I think that, obviously, we have to do better. We can actually address the issue of bullying within our school systems.

But, really, we have to look at the heart of the matter, and that is one of collectively working together. Bill 13 and Bill 14: We can argue that ours is better than theirs. But I think the member from Kingston and the Islands made a good point: This is a nonpartisan issue. It should be a nonpartisan issue, because it affects everyone and their families. So, Mr. Speaker, I have to say we are looking toward working with the other parties: the third party and the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Ottawa Centre has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My gratitude to the members from Durham and Algoma-Manitoulin, the Attorney General, and the member from Northumberland-Quinte West.

Speaker, I stand here as the member for Ottawa Centre, and there's only one group of people I speak for, and that is the people of Ottawa Centre and nobody else. They are telling me again and again that we need to take action on bullying. They are telling me that we all need to work together as a group of responsible, elected members and deal with this issue.

They're telling me, "Bill 13, Bill 14—we don't know. Work together and take action on bullying." They're telling me, because they do watch, "Stop playing games in this Legislature. Get to work. Don't delay debate on this important issue." Let's talk and find a solution to bullying.

Most importantly, Speaker, believe it or not, the kids are watching. They're talking about it. I go to a lot of schools—elementary and high schools. They are talking about this particular issue, and kudos to them. They want action, and they're saying, "We don't get it. Why are you taking so long? Why can we not have a law in place so we can start working with our teachers, so we can start working with our principal, so we can start working with our administrators, so we can start working with ourselves and start dealing with the issue around bullying—bullying of all kinds?"

We need to take action. Speaker, I urge every single member: Let's work together and pass a law by June so that we can implement it in our schools for September.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. I'm glad to speak on this bill. It's a pretty close issue to myself. About two years ago, I had a visitation at a funeral home. One of my employees who had left us—she had moved on to another job—her 13-year-old son decided just before Mother's Day to end his life. It wasn't because he was sick; basically, he was bullied, and he was sick of being picked on at school and having no help, no supports from the school, the school board or the community at large.

I went to that visitation, and I haven't really gone to a visitation for a child before. It was quite shocking and



startling. A lot of emotions went through my mind at the time. There was anger and rage, but most of all it was helplessness. I felt helpless because what could I do as a community member, a pharmacist in the community, for my old employee? How could I help this family? How could I prevent this from going on? At the time, the helplessness you feel—you know, it hurts. It eats away at you. So I'm glad now that I'm in a position where I feel that I can help.

I am very, very proud of my fellow caucus members: Elizabeth Witmer from Kitchener–Waterloo, who came up with quite an extensive bill. I'm proud to be part of her caucus, and I'm quite proud to be alongside Lisa MacLeod here from Carleton–Nepean—Nepean–Carleton. I always say it backwards. But I'm proud to be a colleague with Lisa and her advocacy on bullying, and I just give you very much applause.

I did have a long speech on this, but this morning I thought, "I'm representing Elgin–Middlesex–London. I'll give out some emails that I received on it, just so my constituents' thoughts are heard in this Legislature." Some of them have come from maybe earlier.

This one comes from Anne Taylor, chair of the St. Thomas–Elgin Anti-Bullying Coalition. Anne is actually the mother of the son who took his life, and used to work for me.

"We are calling on all parties to work together and take time for careful consideration over the drafting of a final bill. 'Bullying is abusive in nature and is a result of intolerance, inequity and misuses of power. In order to put an end to bullying and bullycide, we must use legislation to help build this framework. The language must be concise and specific regarding bullying and peer abuse. Our hope is to have a bill strictly devoted to anti-bullying for all students and to keep other issues of equality separate so that the bill's purpose is not distorted, making it about political reputations or narrowing the bullying focus to issues of sexual orientation and sex education, instead of the safety and learning success of every single one of the children and youth in this province.'"

This next one comes from Corina Morrison, co-founder of the London Anti-Bullying Coalition. I've met with Corina. She was on my doorstep right after the election. She is an advocate who is non-stop, and I've met with her numerous times over the past few months.

"It is vital to the well-being of our children, that legislation gets it right. 'Without informed decision-making and effective legislation, every Ontario student remains at risk.'"

This comes from Karen Sebben, co-founder, York Region Anti-Bullying Coalition: "My son's three years of bullying took the form of homophobia, and he is not homosexual. As parents it didn't matter to us what form the bullying took. The fact remains that aggression and assault were taking place regardless of the reason. This is the focus of any anti-bullying legislation and PCs' Elizabeth Witmer got it right with Bill 14."

This comes from Katie Neu, co-founder of Bullying Canada: "We have to look at all of the lives being lost as

a result of the bullying they have endured, as well as those coming forward with their school horror stories and realize that something has to be done. Bullying is not being taken seriously enough and needs to be addressed before this epidemic takes even more lives."

These are the experts in bullying; it's not us. I think we need to listen to the experts and follow through.

I've got some emails here. These are a group of law students. I'm sure we all got this email, but I'm going to read it out anyways.

"As law students of Osgoode Hall Law School, University of Toronto, and University of Ottawa, we want to thank you for your concern regarding the issue of bullying in schools. Many of us have experienced bullying in our own lives and have endured its detrimental effects.

**0930**

"While we commend the goal of Bill 13 insofar as it addresses the need to eradicate bullying, we are concerned with the method and scope of this bill in attempting to achieve 'bullying prevention and intervention.' While bullying can single out traits such as race or sexual orientation, bullying is not limited to students displaying such traits—rather, any and all students may become targets, whether for the size of one's body, for shyness, or for any other characteristic. Legislating that school boards empower only those students who lead clubs from one of four explicitly protected groups—gender equity, anti-racism, respect for students with disabilities, and sexual orientation—sends the message that some grounds for bullying merit more attention and protection than others. Consequently, the scope of the bill is too narrow and exclusive to promote true equity for all potentially targeted traits and identities. Moreover, the bill is silent on character development, and on creating a safe environment for speaking about bullying.

"The bill's section on disciplinary measures similarly gives explicit attention and protection to issue-specific causes. Section 4(2) lists the general term 'bullying' along with 'sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia.' Sex and gender-related issues are not the only motivations behind bullying or violent behaviour; addressing only these groups unduly minimizes the bill's impact. Should we not send the message that all bullying is unacceptable, regardless of what prompts it? Furthermore, the sanctions, or 'appropriate consequences' for 'inappropriate behaviour' listed under subsection 7(3) are vague, and give arbitrary power to schools to decide their own standard of 'appropriateness.' We suggest that such licence may alienate or marginalize students whose conscientious beliefs may not align with the dominant views of school boards about what merits punitive sanctions."

I got another email: "I have ... been very busy with our many appointments all because of bullying. I sincerely hope changes are coming to keep our kids safe. My oldest, who endured bullying in grade 4 then intensified in grades 7 and 8, chose to go to an out of boundary high school to make a fresh start. (He started counselling in July 2010.) Over this past summer, not only the usual

nervousness of starting grade 9 in a school where you don't know many, but he was so afraid of being bullied again, not only did he suffer emotionally but it became physical—heart palpitations, involuntary spastic twitching, unable to participate in all the activities he once loved—basketball, soccer, swimming, golf.” He wasn't allowed to be a kid anymore. “He used to be an avid reader, read all the time and could not wait to start another novel.” His hygiene started to become neglected. “He ‘would rather be dead than go to school.’ We were in a very bad place. I was worried for his personal safety.

“Anyways after lots of outside help, he is now going to begin his third type of therapy and medication ... he is doing better. We have been told it's still a long road, and it makes me want to scream because he is 14 and this is not how life should be for a teenager. I am just very fortunate and count my blessings that he is still with us.”

Families are going through too much in this province over bullying. Those that survive bullying are affected emotionally for life. They're scared, and it's hard to bring them back. It's time to work together. Bill 14 is an amazing bill, and I salute it and I support it. Hopefully, we can work together and get one unified bill and get it out to our students in this province. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I've been listening quite intensely to all of the discussions going on here in the House today, and it seems to me that we're all under the same agreement. It doesn't matter what kind of bullying is happening; we know it's happening. That's the key issue. We know that we need special-interest groups because the kids are going to create their own special-interest groups. It's them who are feeling the heat on this.

The problem with this bill that I'm seeing is that we don't have the funding to back up this program. Who are going to be the ones administering the program? Who are going to be the psychologists on-site, the therapists on-site to deal with these kids who are having these issues? We're already having funding shortfalls when it comes to EAs for our disabled children and children with special needs. So who's going to be the one to take the extra stand and to do the extra work that's needed when these kids come to them? We have teachers and we have staff in the schools. They're already over-bound—and yet we have no one to watch a playground. Where's the issue here? If we don't have enough supervision in the front of the school where they're fighting on the front steps, and we have adults walking by them, where are we going wrong here?

Instead of arguing about what kind of bullying is happening in our province, maybe we'd better be looking at how we are going to fund the education system better to make sure we do have adults responsible who are going to step in and take a stand, that we do have adults and therapists and everybody—EAs—at the school to make sure the kids have the resources that they need to make sure it works.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments? The member from Scarborough East.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** No, Scarborough—Agincourt, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you for correcting me—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** But your member stood up first. The member from Scarborough—Agincourt. No tricking the Speaker. It's not nice.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to stand and to be given an opportunity to speak in support of Bill 13. I'm very sad and very sorry to hear from my colleague from Elgin—Middlesex—London about that tragedy. I think that was one preventable death that all of us are deeply saddened by.

The proposed legislation is about protecting students, and at the same time creating a safe and inclusive environment so that every young person in our school can learn. That's what this bill is all about.

I appreciate all the constructive feedback shared with us this morning by my colleagues, but we need to move forward. We need to move forward with legislation that is strong, robust, comprehensive, and that will protect young people at the same time, to ensure their safety. It's not just about protection; it's also about providing resources.

The legislation is very clear. It talks about providing consequences, because we need young people to know there will be consequences to your bullying. We all know bullying is a learned behaviour. You're not born a bully. You learn about these kinds of behaviours.

The other thing in the legislation is there will be a recognized Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. Again, it will be education and prevention, and there will be resources to support. I know the member from Hamilton Mountain expressed concern about who's going to be funding this proposed legislation and what have you. There are going to be resources, especially for the mental health piece, because we know that young people who have been bullied, or will be bullied down the road, need that support—not just the bullied, but also the perpetrator.

I fully support this legislation, and, moving forward, I'm happy to be working with my colleague to bring both Bills 13 and 14 together.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm pleased to speak for a couple of minutes on Bill 13, and the address by my colleague from Elgin—Middlesex—London is a good segue into this.

A young man made an appointment and came in to see me in my office, a fellow by the name of Dustin Garron: 16 years old, multiple suicide attempts, has experienced bullying in his life at school. Dustin is also gay, and made it clear that the reasons for bullying had nothing to do with his sexual orientation, nor did his suicide attempts.

He was disappointed in the way that this government deals with mental illness, very disappointed in the focus in Bill 13 but more pleased with the focus in Bill 14,



which attacks and deals with the issue of bullying whatever the reason may be. I thank the Attorney General for standing here earlier today and saying exactly the same thing.

We have a responsibility in this Legislature to make sure that we do everything we humanly, possibly can to eliminate bullying. My friend from Durham talked about how the school boards are saying—and how this writer said—it has to be dealt with head on, right at day one, so that the culture in our school systems, the culture everywhere, is one that says no to bullying. It is wrong, and we as adults and we as legislators must ensure that that does not happen.

It should not be an issue that is being politicized by the government, by their stance on it in trying to put one particular emphasis on one particular reason why someone may or may not be bullied. It is time to get down to the business of doing what is right for all children here in the province of Ontario and stop playing political games.

0940

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'm new here to this Legislature and it's a bit confusing for me to hear this kind of debate because, to me, I hear people stand up, we all despise bullying, we've all seen it; we all know we need to deal with it. Obviously, for families who have lost a loved one to suicide when that's a result of bullying, it's tragic. We all agree on that.

Obviously, I support this bill. It makes sense. We need good, strong equity policies in our schools. We need to make sure that we have schools that have a school culture that is anti-oppressive, that supports people who are victims of bullying and supports bullies as well to deal with the problems that they have.

But to me, I feel like the debate is sort of off in some sense, in that we're talking about a province with growing inequality. The problem with the bully debate is that it disguises the real issue behind bullying, which is power imbalance, that some people have more power and some people have less. The real debate that we should be having right now is how we share our resources in this province and the fact that some people have so much power and some people have so little power.

To talk about bullying as if it's the fault of an individual in a school rather than a societal problem, which is what it is—you know, kids learn these things at home, kids learn these things on television, kids learn these from our political leaders. What they see if they're looking in this House is a government that will not stand up for the underdog, will not stand up for people who are struggling. This is the real issue that needs to be addressed here.

Yesterday, our leader, Andrea Horwath, stood up and she said she wants to make sure, if this budget is going to pass, that we stand up for the 99%, that we stand up for people who are struggling, and that the people who are doing very well, the top 1%, give a little bit back. We'll

see if Dalton McGuinty and the government is listening, but this is the way we need to go forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Elgin—Middlesex—London has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I want to thank my colleagues from Hamilton Mountain, Scarborough—Agincourt, Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke and Davenport for commenting.

I think what we need to do with this bill is we need a bill that's equal and accepting to all and rules out that one form of bullying is more consequential than the other. It's across the board. We need to come out and say bullying is wrong and we need to have supports in place for our kids.

The one point that Bill 13 misses—and I'm just going to comment quickly on it, because Elizabeth Witmer's Bill 14 attacks it—is cyberbullying. Kids can't get away from bullying. It used to be, 10, 15 years ago, you could leave school and at least go home to your family and be safe and secure. Nowadays, you've got Facebook and Twitter and what have you chasing you home. It's there, it's constant, and it's 24 hours, seven days a week. I'm glad Bill 14 actually tackles cyberbullying, because I think it's getting worse and we need to start hitting it hard from all aspects. We need to have legislation that encompasses yesterday, today and tomorrow, and Bill 14 does so, and again, I'm very grateful.

We all have stories here. We're all affected by bullying one way or the other, and whether you like it or not, it does affect you emotionally and physically, whether you realize it or not, because these are heart-wrenching stories that gnaw away at you. The sooner we can get some solutions out of this Legislature and into Ontario helping our kids, the better.

I have an eight-year-old daughter at home and I never want her to go through bullying. I just couldn't picture it. Thanks for your time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I am happy to speak to Bill 13, and I will say that we support Bill 13 and we don't have a problem with that. It surprises me that there are some Conservative members who say they do have a problem with that, because their Bill 14 is equally good and adds different elements to the aspect of bullying, and New Democrats have other things to say about it as well.

I'm not sure why some Tories are presenting it as an either/or. I don't know why you're doing that. When some of you stand up to speak to it, you recognize elements of Bill 13, you support it, but you say, "No, that's not good enough. Our bill is the one that does it."

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** One shot to get it—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I don't see why you do that. The member from Nepean—Carleton says it's a one-shot deal. No, it isn't, necessarily. It isn't. And your Bill 14 doesn't do it all either, as New Democrats have pointed out. So there's this ideology of right and wrong that is completely mistaken, and I don't know why you do that. I know why Tories are against this bill, and it's the part

of the bill that says the following: "A new section 303.1 requires boards to support pupils who want to establish and lead activities or organizations that promote gender equity, anti-racism, the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people with disabilities or the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities." What is so wrong with that? Why are some Conservatives so afraid of that? I just don't understand it. We're living in an age where, if you can't accept that, something is definitely not right about your political positioning on this. I get terribly nervous and worried about that kind of politics.

Section 5, subsection 301 of the act, talks about, "which sets out the purposes of the provincial code of conduct, is amended to include preventing bullying in schools." That means all bullying. I know that as some of the Tories are talking to each other, they may not realize that that section deals with all bullying. It's clear that the Conservatives either do not see that or fail to see that or deliberately don't want to read that as part of the bill. So when the member from Ottawa-Nepean says that, "We want to deal with all bullying," well, that section talks about all bullying. What she doesn't want to say, even though she herself supports it, is that section 7, the new section 303, is something that puts a new obligation to school boards, and even though she agrees with it, she's saying that is not something her party can live with. I've got to tell you that I feel very, very disappointed in them in that regard.

What does Bill 14 do? Bill 14 adds a few other elements, and it says the following—and how could I disagree with it? Bill 14 says that some of the additions will define "bullying" as "severe or repeated" harmful behaviour. I think that's a good and useful suggestion. Does it take away from Bill 13, or add to it? It adds to it; it doesn't take away. Requiring the minister's annual report to the Legislature to include school board data about bullying incidents—that adds to Bill 13, it doesn't take away. There is no disagreement between these two elements. The inclusion of bullying prevention in the curriculum—well, that is added in Bill 13, so that's not an additional component of it. So that's not a problem.

So you have these additional elements in Bill 14 that are reasonable amendments, and I don't know why they can't simply say 13 is okay, 14 is good because it adds a few other elements—and New Democrats are going to talk about the root causes of bullying and what we could be doing about it, which neither Bill 13 nor 14 does. So when the member from Ottawa Centre says we need to deal with the root causes, well, he says it but he doesn't say how. It's not contained in the bill at all. There's no mention of how we deal with the root causes. So even though he speaks the language of New Democrats, it doesn't speak to it in the bill. That is the problem that New Democrats speak to. Neither Bill 13 nor Bill 14 speaks to it.

Am I proposing that we create yet another, New Democratic, bill, Bill 15, to deal with that problem? No. We've got two bills, and we're going to say that as we

deal with each, New Democrats will propose suggestions to make it better. We could propose a Bill 15 and present ourselves as the real party of difference on the issue of bullying, but we're not going to do that. So when I hear the Tories say, "No, we've got to destroy Bill 13 because it's not good enough and ours is better," I say I don't know.

**0950**

I say to the Tories and to the Liberals, do you remember when Falconer did his report? Mr. Falconer did his report and made a number of suggestions about violence in the schools, and no one, actually, in this assembly ever dealt with that report, because it was commissioned by the Toronto board—and Soo knows what I'm talking about. The Toronto board, lacking in funds, could never implement that report, but the provincial government could have. I suspect the Toronto board made efforts at trying to get the province to fund some of those things and failed miserably. I know some of the trustees who are here as Liberal MPPs didn't want to attack their Liberal colleagues, but I would have, as every other board before them did, where we had New Democratic trustees attack the New Democratic government—and they did that. The Liberal trustees should have done the same with their Liberal colleagues, and didn't. That, I find regrettable.

If we want to deal with issues of violence, let's look at what Mr. Falconer says, because he says preventing violence in schools requires adequate resources for proper student supervision, adequate funding, community outreach workers to build links with the community, and adequate funding for student supports such as social workers and child and youth workers. None of those implementations were reviewed, or they might have been reviewed but they were never implemented; they were never addressed. They need to be.

We need to understand why young men and women bully others. There's a long list of reasons why it is that young people bully, and it all connects to the culture and connects to families. If we've got alcohol abuse in the family, it's going to show up in the school system. If there are mental health issues, it will show up as a problem in our school system. If there is bullying against gays and lesbians and transsexuals in our schools, it's because it is utterly connected to every aspect of our culture that, obviously, says that that isn't right. We need to fight that, and we need to fight that ferociously, aggressively. There are multiple reasons. Poverty is another problem that reflects itself in the school system.

We need to understand why they do it, and punishing them simply will not solve the problem, which is what part of what Bill 13 does and Bill 14 does. Expelling students doesn't deal with the problem of sexual abuse of children against children, which has happened and has not been dealt with by boards.

Boards need financial support, principals need financial support, and in spite of what this Minister of Education is doing, attacking boards, she is not supporting them financially. When we impose a new obligation on boards, which I support, it has to be imposed with finan-



cial supports. This minister and other ministers cannot say that boards can do this. When boards are required legally to implement Bill 13, it means they have to do it, but if they're not given the financial support, they will not be able to do it well. That's the contribution New Democrats make to this debate on Bill 13 and Bill 14.

But, please, let's proceed with Bill 13. It's a good bill. Let's then deal with Bill 14 and not bully each other on that issue, and then let's look at what it is that we can do by way of additional amendments to Bill 13 and Bill 14 to make it a little better. I think we can do it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate and to follow up on the always excellent remarks of the member from Trinity-Spadina.

I had occasion today to receive a letter that was sent to me from Vancouver. It's from a young woman who spent her youth growing up in the town of Oakville. She has decided, because of what we're doing in Ontario and because of the attention being paid to this issue, that she'd like to open up a little bit about her own experience. I won't use her name, obviously, but I'll tell you what she says in the letter. It's a long letter, but there are some parts that really stand out. One says, "I was teased because I was smart, [but I was] left out because I was poor. [I was] ganged up on because I had no one to defend me, and this was allowed to happen because I was a bit of a precocious child and that doesn't tend to win one the kindness of teachers. In short, there was no protection for me when I was on the grounds of my elementary school."

She goes on to say, "The lessons I took away from my childhood are not ones that I would teach children of my own. It taught me that being smart makes you a target; that any sign of confidence is a target to be shot at; that being happy is futile because there will always be someone to tear it down and rip it apart. It taught me not to trust anyone, that people will always say one thing and do another opposite, more sinister thing in its stead, and that like a pack of hyenas, people (adults and children alike) will team up to topple the thing they find most threatening."

When you think of the childhood that this person experienced, it seems to me that what we're proposing to do today by Bill 13 or 14, or whatever bill the adults choose to call it, is something that needs to be done—and it needs to be done, I think, in some haste. Young people are still suffering through this on a daily basis, and until Queen's Park acts on this issue, it won't stop. It's time that we move ahead on this, Speaker. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's a pleasure to once again engage in debate today and discuss what the member from Trinity-Spadina has talked about.

I want to commend the member from Oakville for bringing a letter to this House from one of his former constituents. I think that's probably the most important

thing that we've done since debating both Bill 13 and Bill 14, is talk about the issues, I know I want to make mention of my colleague from Elgin-Middlesex-London and the tragic story that occurred in his community, and as well to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, because I think we've got a few issues here.

I've spoken a lot about Bill 13 and Bill 14, but I think what we've seen occur in this House are people bringing stories from their communities, from people that they know, about three issues actually. Bullying is one, mental health is another and, finally, suicide prevention and suicide being committed, which makes me think—and I say this as a member of the assembly, like every other member of the assembly, 106 other people—if there was ever a time for greater study, perhaps even a select committee on dealing with these types of issues all together, it might be now. I think that while we've done this as a so-called committee of the whole, even though we're not a committee of the whole, we've all discussed it. We all have views. We all have values that we've brought from our communities about this issue. I just hope it's all reflected by the minister when we move forward, because we've obviously missed that opportunity to work together at an earlier stage.

So I do appreciate what the members have said, particularly when they bring the stories from their own communities to this assembly. It has affected me, and I know it has affected every other member.

Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I don't want to be repetitive, Mr. Speaker, but you know, I think I will, because everybody needs to hear this in this House.

I'll start first by giving you a little bit of a discussion I had with my son last night. When I was talking to my son, he said, "You know, where most of the bullying happens is outside in the school yards or outside on the streets." He said, "Why are you guys calling so many darn recesses? Why are the bells ringing so many times? Why aren't you dealing in the classroom where the issue needs to be dealt with? Why aren't you doing that, Dad?"

Anyway, I thought about that and I said, you know what? For a 13-year-old boy, he's pretty bright. He's really, really smart.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** He gets it from his mom.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Yeah, he might get it from his mom.

But, anyways, I think working together is really an acknowledgement of someone else's work. Bill 13 has great points—some points—but Bill 14, from the member from Nepean-Carleton, also has good points. Our member—I was actually very surprised that he was accused of bullying—from Trinity-Spadina also brings up good points. How is it that this House cannot stay in this House long enough to acknowledge the goods of all three positions and get this done right?

The member from Ottawa Centre said it quite well earlier, that kids in Ottawa Centre are talking about it in

their classrooms. Well, guess what? They're all talking about it. They're all looking at us in this room, and if we don't get the work done in here and we keep running out, ringing bells and not getting the work done, we're failing them. So let's work together, let's be reasonable, and let's get this right. I think we owe it to our kids.

1000

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to be given another opportunity to speak in response to Bill 13. Let me first respond to clarify for my colleague from Trinity–Spadina. When I was a trustee for the Toronto District School Board like my colleague from Don Valley West, we were unfortunately faced with a tragedy resulting in the Falconer report. Working with our government, we were able to create one of the most successful programs that was ever introduced by this government. It's called Focus on Youth.

Focus on Youth is one of the leading evidence-based programs, now going on almost five years—I think four or five years—whereby we provide resource support for our young people, free summer camp and employment opportunities. For the past couple of years—for last year I can say the data: We hired over 600 young people in the city of Toronto through the Toronto District School Board, becoming one of the largest employers in the city. The youth who were hired were high-risk youth. Not only were they given an employment opportunity, they were also given credits. This program also provides credit recovery. I wanted to make sure my colleague from Trinity–Spadina had the facts straight.

At the end of the day, we recognize the concerns on safety. The school board will never get enough money. They will always criticize the government about not enough funds here, there and everywhere. But I do know we have social workers, and we have psychologists at TDSB. But at the end of the day, we also need to make sure there are resource supports.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed legislation is not just about protecting young people, it's also providing resource support. The member from Ottawa–Nepean talked about the mental health piece.

All of us in this House support some kind of legislation to protect our students and ensure that they can learn. Maybe together, we can do something for it before the beginning of the new school year.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Trinity–Spadina has a two-minute response.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thank you for all the comments. To the member for Scarborough–Agincourt, the Toronto school board is about to lay off potentially 1,000 workers. We've been trustees, both of us on the same board. We know what we're talking about here. They're about to lay off the very people you mentioned, which includes social workers, psychologists, educational assistants and other eyes in the Toronto board. Please, come on. I know you've got to talk to your minister about this because she's attacking the school board and saying she

gives them a whole lot of money. The reality is that in a system that's based on numbers, you've been getting less money over the years, and you're short \$85 million. Your school board is short \$85 million, and they're going to have to lay off up to 1,000 workers. Please.

This bill is about bullying, and we think there are good elements in this bill. We hope that the Conservatives will make amendments, as we will, in committee. I think overall, this can work, but we need to deal with the fact that school boards are doing a lot of work without the adequate resources, and they've been doing it more and more each and every year. We're imposing new obligations on boards and principals and teachers, and we do this without understanding the incredible workload that principals and teachers have. We simply think it's a magical thing for them to be able to do on their own; we simply say, "Do it," and it happens. There's simply no understanding from provincial members about what it takes and the supports they require.

This bill does impose a lot of work on them, but if it doesn't have the support so they can do the job well, it simply will not be done. That's what New Democrats will speak to at the hearings.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Scarborough East–Pickering.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Pickering–Scarborough East, thank you, Speaker. I'm very happy to speak on this very important bill today. We are committed to passing Bill 13 as soon as possible.

I do want to acknowledge the member from Trinity–Spadina and the member from Hamilton Mountain for their supportive comments. We are in total agreement: We need to get on with this. However, I also want to assure the member from Trinity–Spadina that we do know what it takes to make this bill happen, and I will be speaking to that soon.

We want to work with our colleagues in opposition, and I call on the members of the official opposition to help pass this bill as quickly as possible. Speaker, I get many calls in my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East about this bill. People are supportive of it. People have some suggestions. That's what we have committee for. We need to move this forward.

I do want to share a comment we received from Dara in Toronto. She says, "I wish to congratulate the Liberal government on putting forward an anti-bullying platform that provides recognition, protection and support to all Ontario's children. I applaud you and [the Premier] for standing up for what is right, for showing all our children that we live in a province where discrimination and bullying of any kind, for any reason, is not okay, that it is their right to do what they can do to stop it and that our government will support them in supporting each other." So I thank Dara from Toronto for sending her comments to us.

The Accepting Schools Act, if passed, will bring tougher consequences for bullying and hate-motivated actions. It will require all schools to support students who want to lead activities that promote understanding and



respect for all. It will require school boards to develop policies and guidelines that include supports and resources for all students, and it will recognize Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in legislation to ensure and support existing activities in boards and within the communities, to make it very clear that bullying is not okay.

The proposed Accepting Schools Act is a key component of our government's plan to make Ontario schools healthy, safe and inclusive learning environments where students feel accepted. Ontario is recognized across jurisdictions and leading the way with aggressive safe school legislation, and I know, Mr. Speaker, that there are many school boards in our province that already have laid strong foundations for this legislation. There are many school boards, including the Durham District School Board—where I sit on the special ed committee of that school board—where they have not just policies in place, but they've executed on those, and this legislation will build and strengthen on those, so I'm very proud of that.

Ontario is the first province to require all school staff to report serious student incidents, including bullying, to the principal of the school. But there is more work to do, and that's why we're making it law to create safer and more accepting schools for all students. The proposed legislation will provide clear expectations and increased accountability for school boards and bullies, including making expulsion a possible consequence for bullying.

One of the things, Speaker, I like about this bill is that it recognizes all of the key people involved in bullying issues: the bully, the witnesses, the bystanders, the staff—all the people affected—the victims. We speak to supports for everyone involved because we can't address a serious issue if we don't have the sufficient supports in place.

And getting back to the member for Trinity-Spadina: Again, I appreciate his supportive comments about the bill, but I do want to assure him that there are enough hews in this bill. We know how to execute this, Speaker, and the bill will build on our efforts over the last six years to prevent bullying and create a very positive school climate. Some of the things include integrating the mental health supports in schools as part of Ontario's 10-year mental health and addictions strategy, which is very much focused on children in this province, Speaker.

The bill also required the establishment of an Accepting Schools expert panel to give advice on new resources for parents, school staff and other matters and other players involved in the process. The legislation will also provide direction to the curriculum council to report back next year on integrating equity and bullying prevention across the curriculum.

The legislation also provides for public awareness campaigns to remind all Ontarians about the role in preventing bullying. Like all legislation, we can have good legislation but if we don't communicate it properly, we keep it the best-kept secret—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I just want to say that we have six sidebars going on and it's very diffi-

cult to hear what's being said. I'd appreciate it if you have any heated conversations that you take them outside. Thank you.

The member, continue.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Speaker. We are doing more than just telling bullied kids it will get better; we are working together to make it better now.

**1010**

It is incumbent on each and every one of us to make sure students feel safe, included and welcome in Ontario schools.

If we all think back, most of us have experienced bullying at some point during our school years—some more than others, unfortunately. It does impact people, and it stays with them for life. I remember feeling very intimidated and threatened by someone half my size in height in high school, and I'll never forget that experience. That is a much more minor example compared to some of the very tragic situations we've seen happen in our province. Unfortunately, many suffer in silence for fear of reprisal or for fear of not being supported by their school or their school board. That is why this legislation is so important.

School safety has been a priority for this government from the beginning. That's why all school boards must have policies and procedures on bullying prevention and intervention. We need to level the playing field more on all the good work that all the school boards have done around promoting safe schools.

Since 2004, this government has invested \$285 million in safe schools initiatives. They're helping make Ontario schools some of the safest in the world. We are very proud that we're continuing to build on this good work.

If passed, the Accepting Schools Act will create legal obligations for boards to address bullying prevention and early intervention, progressive discipline, and equity and inclusive education. For the very first time, we are defining bullying in legislation so that every student, every teacher, every principal and every parent knows what we're talking about when we say bullying is not okay in our schools.

I spoke the other day about how it is important that this happen in the school environment. Yes, behaviours and values and ethics start at home, but it is at the school environment where many of us get socialized. That's where a lot of our learning happens. Research shows that relationships in the school environment have a direct correlation to how students progress into adulthood, how they make important life decisions, how they choose educational paths and so on. So doing this in the school context is very important, very compelling.

One of our greatest strengths is diversity. We believe that all students, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability—all of that—have the right to a safe and positive learning environment.

We've talked about the gay-straight alliances, and I just want to comment that under Bill 13, the naming of such groups is not overly prescriptive and provides flexibility, because we know that every school board has its

own culture, has its own rhythm. So this bill provides flexibility on a number of fronts.

I want to share some examples of some of the names of gay-straight alliances currently in place. One is Be the Movement, from Campbellford District High School. Another is Anti-Homophobia Alliance, at Victoria Park Collegiate. Another one is Born Equal, Humberview Secondary School; Dialog, at Cardinal Carter Secondary School; Kenora Positive Spaces Alliance, Beaver Brae Secondary School; and YES, which stands for Youth Embracing Sexualities, at Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate, which is in my honourable member's riding of Scarborough—Guildwood and also where my daughter happens to dance, so I'm very familiar with that high school.

Our focus is not on the naming of these clubs, Speaker. The legislation is about making sure kids get the support they need. We've hired more staff in schools, more social workers, more attendance counsellors, lunch yard and bus supervisors across the province. I'm very proud of that, and I'm very proud to support this bill.

I strongly encourage all members of the opposition to help us move this forward quickly to committee.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** On behalf of the member for Halton, I'm pleased to introduce Janet Mogus, who is the mother of page Emma Mogus, who's doing a great job representing the riding of Halton.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm delighted to introduce to the House James Loney, who's here for page Seph. Thank you.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** As part of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations' Queen's Park day, we have from York University Livy Visano and Mitzi Grace Mitchell, here paying a visit to the House today. Welcome.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'd ask all members to help me in welcoming the grade 10 students from Holy Trinity High School in Bradford, and their teacher, Maureen Reesor, who will be here shortly.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'd like to introduce Candy Bell and Mike Dionne, from Port Colborne, and Tom Bell, from Welland. Tom is the grandfather of page Alexander Forgay. Candy and Mike are the aunt and uncle.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Peterborough.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Oh, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry. I'm so excited about Peterborough Day today that you kind of get carried away a bit.

I'd like to introduce Sara Humphreys and Marcus Harvey, who are members of the faculty at Trent Univer-

sity in Peterborough, as part of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations; and a good friend of mine in the Speaker's east gallery, Jay Amer, from Peterborough. He's here for Peterborough Day, and he's president of Amer and Associates.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to welcome to the Ontario Legislature agricultural equipment dealers in Ontario: President Beverly Leavitt and Chairperson Keith Stoltz. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'd like to welcome Mario Spagnuolo, the first vice-president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, from my riding of Essex, as well as members in the gallery, Bobbye Baylis, JoAnn Hayes, Theresa Hayes and Patti Hayes, who are here today to pay tribute to Pat Hayes, former member of provincial Parliament for the riding of Essex.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Boy, we've got a full house of visitors today. I want to recognize, from the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario, who were kind enough to stop by my office, Steve Hawkins. We have Albert Hendriks, who is, by the way, from Welland, so that's great. We also have Rick Orr. And I want to apologize to one of the guests who's here; I didn't get the lady's business card, but thank you for coming by the office and sharing time with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Leeds—Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I know we have a number of insurance brokers here today meeting with MPPs. I'd like to give a special welcome to one of my constituents, Brenda Duffy. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** As we approach the holiday and festival of Passover, I have guests who have come to present me with the traditional matzoh: Rabbi Yermi Cohen; his father, Chai Cohen; and his son Mendy Cohen. I want to wish them and the total Jewish community, Chag Sameach.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to welcome some special guests today, who are making their way to the members' gallery. Sarah and our four-week-old son Murphy will be making their inaugural visit, so I'd like to welcome them.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'd like help welcoming the guests of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. We have with us today the president, Constance Adamson from Queen's University, as well as Mark Jones from Queen's University, and Kevin Jaansalu from the Royal Military College of Canada, which is the only military college in Canada.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'd like the assembly to recognize Peter Burns. He's from the great town of Tillsonburg and he's here today with the insurance brokers.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Joining us today at the Legislative Assembly is a former colleague of mine at the Toronto District School Board, former chair John Campbell.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'd like to introduce Kate Lawson and George Freeman from the University of Waterloo, Judy Bates from Wilfrid Laurier, and Ted McGee from St. Jerome's University.



**Mr. Mike Colle:** The IBAO is here, the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario. They're having a reception in the legislative dining room for everybody at 5 o'clock. I've got Greg Robertson, who is a broker in my riding. I went to high school with his father, Ross Robertson. Welcome to Greg Robertson.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to introduce Rick Orr. He's the owner of Orr Insurance in Stratford—

**Interjection:** Ornge?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Orr Insurance—which was founded in 1895. He is also president of the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario. Welcome.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** It's my pleasure to introduce Connie Guberman, a senior lecturer in the department of women's studies at the University of Toronto, Scarborough campus, in my riding of Pickering-Scarborough East. She's here with the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to recognize from my riding Hannah Scott from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, and Sara Humphreys and Marcus Harvey from Trent University in Oshawa. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'd like to welcome to the House today David Morrison and his wife, Yzzel Lazgare. They are friends of my legislative assistant, Bill Killorn, and they have just moved here from Spain. Welcome to Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Regrettably, we have gone well beyond the time allotted for introduction of guests. I will extend that by a short moment by introducing my other brother, Joe Peters, in the gallery today.

We also have with us the delegation for the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario in the Speaker's gallery. Thank you for being here.

And we also have special guests with us. We have today in the Speaker's gallery the constitution implementation committee of the Republic of Kenya, led by the High Commissioner of the Republic of Kenya to Canada, His Excellency Mr. Simon Nabukwesi. Thank you so much for being with us today. Welcome.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Our delegation is here to study democracy at its best.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'll do my best to help. My first question is to the Premier.

Ontario's job crisis has reached a fever pitch, Premier. You have 600,000 people unemployed. Yet your idea of a jobs strategy is more studies, more reports, more spinning of bureaucratic wheels—like your budget's so-called jobs council, or handing out millions to companies like WindTronics, only to have them turn around and leave.

Ontario is Canada's largest province. We have the potential to succeed. You should strive for an environment that creates jobs and economic growth. Instead, you hide behind councils and summits and reports. Now, rather than listing off all the short-term jobs you have subsidized, thought of subsidizing or plan to subsidize, tell us how many jobs this so-called jobs council will actually create. And if you don't have a direct answer, why are you doing it?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, the budget creates 170,000 net new jobs with higher incomes on average. Later this morning, I will be sharing with Ontarians—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I apologize to the House. I may have given you the impression that today it's okay to get loud. The opposite is true. Please.

Minister?

1040

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Later this morning, I'll be sharing with Ontarians that fourth quarter GDP grew by 0.5%, an annual rate of 1.8%. We've recovered all the jobs, and more, since the recession. Consumer spending is back, economic growth is back, and business investment in machinery and equipment is at an all-time high. It's time that member starts speaking positively about this great province that's poised for growth—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Go to the head of the class.

Moving on to the next example of empty gestures with no substance, your failed budget also talks about the creation of a productivity summit, but, not unexpectedly, it is silent about any measures that would actually improve productivity. What is clear is that instead of reducing red tape for businesses, this Premier is going to bring in more consultants to tell him what every business in Ontario already knows and has been saying for years: If you want to increase productivity in the province of Ontario, reduce the red tape burden on businesses. It's that simple.

Will the Premier get his head out of the clouds and adopt the Ontario PC jobs plan that reduces red tape, reduces business taxes and gets people back to work?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our tax plan for jobs and growth was the greatest reduction in business regulation in Ontario history. That member and his party voted against it. They didn't listen to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. They didn't listen to exporters and manufacturers. They didn't support a major bill in the last session that reduced burdens.

Today, this morning, the CFIB is out with their business barometer, and Ontario is now above the national average. It's a sign, according to them, that business confidence is coming back. The economy's growing.

Your plan was a waste. The people of Ontario said no to you. They said yes to this government, and they're saying yes to a budget that creates 170,000 net new jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** That's one angry man. He doesn't listen to us; he doesn't listen to them; he doesn't listen to the people. It's amazing that, after eight years at the helm, this Premier continues to rely on consultants to tell him what to do and still continues to fail.

That brings us to the FIT program, which has been nothing short of disastrous. Your feed-in tariff program has caused energy prices to skyrocket, and it has killed jobs in Ontario. The Auditor General stated that for every green job created, we lose up to four jobs in the general economy. That means you have actually killed as many as 80,000 jobs in Ontario with the FIT program alone.

Premier, how many people need to lose their jobs before you stop pushing this failed pet project? Are you too politically motivated to accept its failure, or do you simply not care about the damage?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Pure fiction, Mr. Speaker. Ontario's green energy policies have created, so far, 20,000 net new jobs.

The member opposite may want to refer to one-off announcements. Well, let me tell you about some one-off announcements. Last week alone: Toyota, an \$80-million investment in Woodstock, with 400 new jobs. That's not a one-off; that's impressive growth from a big company. The Ford Motor Co. is adding a third shift to the Essex engine plant to build the Ford F-150—100 new jobs. That's not a one-off; that's confidence in the future of Ontario. And General Motors: \$245 million in St. Catharines, 300 new jobs—that's not a one-off. That's confidence in Ontario, confidence in the working people of this province, confidence in our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. New question.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is back to the Premier. If your goal was to produce a budget that was heavy on rhetoric and light on action, then congratulations; you have succeeded. That's correct: 57 times you used the word "review"; 26 times you used the word "consult"; 17 times you used the word "explore"; 17 times you used the word "consider." It is no wonder that your ministers don't have time to do anything; they're all too busy talking.

The one thing you don't seem to consider in this budget is actually doing something. We have a recommendation. Will you finally adopt our jobs plan and actually get Ontarians working again?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Their job plan is to hire poll clerks and DROs and force an unnecessary election. We reject that. They want an election. They forget that their so-called jobs plan, their Changebook, was rejected by the people of Ontario only six short months ago. So, no, we don't accept your job plan for more poll clerks, more DROs, more election workers.

We need a steady hand at this time as the Ontario economy is beginning to grow and get back on its feet. We reject your jobs plan for poll clerks and DROs. We're going to stand and implement this budget, which has been embraced by most major business and economic groups in Ontario, and I'll share quotes with the member after. No more poll—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I've got a new plank for the jobs plan: That minister should step down. Premier, Minister, it is clear that the phrase "in-action" is lost on you; it sure doesn't figure prominently in the budget. Twenty-four times, you used the word "negotiate"; 27 times, you used the word "encourage"; 17 times, you used the word "facilitate"; 14 times, you used the word "discuss."

The time for talk is long over. Negotiations have ended. Discussions are done. Forget the blustering. Everyone knows what you refuse to accept: We need action; we need it now. Will this Premier do what's right? Will he do what's necessary? Will he abandon this weak budget and adopt the Ontario PC plan that will put people back to work?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Here's what Janet Ecker said: "...the government is making ... tough" and "necessary choices." Here's what the DBRS credit rating agency said: "Overall, DBRS views the continuation of the fiscal recovery plan and the increasing emphasis on cost containment as an encouraging step in the right direction." Here's what Mary Webb, the senior economist at Scotiabank, said: "The challenge for this government in this budget was to provide a credible repair plan, and so it has. It has provided a broad-based plan—detailed, strategic—that they hope will keep them on the deficit reduction track even with more moderate growth."

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite wants to force an election. He wants all of us to resign. We don't want to do that. We want to build a better and stronger future for all Ontarians. I urge him to quit playing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Don't you dare, Minister, pin an election on us. Take responsibility yourself. Premier—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Premier, we've been talking about job creation, but all we've heard from that end is just—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** My observation—

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. My observation is that we have people yelling at each other across the floor not even associated with the questioner or the answerer. I am asking for your attention, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from York, again, when I'm speaking—thank you.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** We've been talking about job creation for a very long time. All we get is rhetoric. Ontario has been hearing that stuff for years. Meanwhile, between the failed FIT program and the lack of a jobs strategy, energy prices skyrocket, and 600,000 people remain out of work. Your government continues to do nothing. You refuse to admit your mistake and back away from the failed FIT program. You ignore calls for action to help the 600,000 people unemployed—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Minister of Finance.

1050

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Since June 2009, Ontario has created more jobs than all the provinces combined. We have recovered more jobs with higher incomes since the depression. Employment is above pre-recession levels. Consumer investment is above; business investment is above. Ontario is absolutely on the right track to getting back to strength, to continuing to build our economy.

As to an election, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid that member and his leader pinned the tail on themselves. They put themselves in a corner where they wouldn't negotiate, they wouldn't talk, they wouldn't offer constructive ideas; instead they walked out. They want an election, aided and abetted by their friends in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, we don't want an election—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Oh, did you hear that, Speaker?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As to that, I hope the member from Ottawa will call her colleagues in the federal government—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier said he'd keep an open mind regarding constructive proposals. Later that day, Speaker, we made some, and almost immediately the election sabres began to rattle.

Can the Premier assure us that he's willing to work with other parties to make this minority government work?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I think I've expressed that sincere intention from the outset. I say to my honourable colleague that we welcome any proposal that she might put forward, but our preference—and I believe this is in the public interest—is that we receive that in its entirety and that we not receive a series of demands.

I would also argue that it's in the interests of a better working relationship that we not learn about these proposals through the media.

I also say, Speaker, I am concerned about additional costs that could be found in the series of—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** This is not the moment to make comments when I am getting things quiet.

**Interjection:** Especially not the Deputy Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That includes the person that just spoke—not helpful.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I say again to my honourable colleague that we welcome proposals. Our preference is that we receive a proposal in its entirety, rather than a series of demands. It's important that we measure the fiscal consequence of a package in its entirety. I say again to my honourable colleague, we're very concerned about any new costs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, as the Premier knows, we have been hearing from everyday Ontarians, and they understand that the province is facing some very challenging times. But families are facing challenging times, too, and the crisis in the household budget affects the bottom line here at Queen's Park.

Yesterday, we did put forward some serious ideas to generate revenue, as well as ease the burden on household budgets. Is the Premier ready to consider measures that would ask for a little bit more from Ontario's highest earners to give families a bit of a break?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I say to my honourable colleague—I remind my honourable colleague—that we've asked wealthier Ontarians to pay more for their prescription medications, seniors in particular; that was part of our budget.

Again, I say to my honourable colleague I'm not prepared to consider one-offs. I think it's really important, and I think it's in the public interest, that we receive the proposal in its entirety so that we can give it due regard and, in fact, measure the fiscal consequences of any particular package. So I would encourage my honourable colleague to tell us, in a more fulsome way, what it is that she would like to put to us by way of a substantive proposal.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, I understand that the Premier has a desire for us to give him proposals, and we're going to continue to do that. We're looking forward to doing that.

I understand also, Speaker, that the Premier has made some comments about wanting to avoid any new taxes. But more and more people are saying that those who make a lot more can actually pay a little more, especially in tough times. In the US, President Obama recently asked, "Do we want to keep giving tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans like me, or Warren Buffett, or Bill Gates—people who don't need them and never asked for them? Or do we want to keep investing in things that will grow our economy and keep us secure?"

Speaker, I ask the question to the Premier because it's a good question. What does he think about this kind of approach?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I would caution my honourable colleague—we have a different taxation system here in Canada and in Ontario, and, I would argue, Speaker, it is much more fair in terms of the way that we tax people across the income spectrums. I think it's much more progressive, Speaker, and the fact of the matter is that the income gap between our lowest earners and highest earners is not nearly as extreme as it is to be found in the United States.

I again say to my honourable colleague, if she has an intention to submit proposals to us, we'd like to see the package in its entirety so that we can give it due regard.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, perhaps the Premier just didn't realize, but the income gap in Ontario and in Canada is growing at a faster rate than that in the United States. I think that's important for him to know. And it's not progressive at all to have a budget that asks people at the top not to contribute at all to the pain at the bottom, Speaker, which is what the Liberals brought forward.

There's no doubt that the Premier asked a lot from families in his budget. I'd urge him really to consider that the families are the people who need a break in these tough times, and he has to think about those who can do more during these tough times. If the Premier was willing to slap an unfair HST and a regressive health tax on everyday Ontarians in his budgets in the past, shouldn't he consider this time asking the province's millionaires and multimillionaires to pay a little bit more to help families in tough times?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I would argue that our budget is, in fact, making the right choices. It's fair and it's balanced.

Just so we understand, Speaker, about where it is we are in terms of increases in program spending over the course of the next three years: For education, it's going to go up 1.7% a year for three years; post-secondary education, 1.9%; health care, 2.1%. And I think this is very important, because I don't think most Ontarians are aware of this: The single greatest increase is for social services, at 2.7%.

Again, I say to my honourable colleagues in the NDP, I would like to think that they would see some of themselves in those numbers, Speaker. It's been said that a budget is more than just an economic statement, it's a statement of our values. We've attached the highest value, Speaker—in fact, 2.7%—to funding social services here in Ontario.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, I think everyone agrees that no budget could be perfect, and I'm hoping that the Premier keeps an open mind and listens to people; for example, like Don from the Sudbury region. Don writes this: "If the Ontario government is going after the average guy, while executives with premium pay

packages to begin with are off scot-free, this is not fair. Austerity should be shared by all." What does the Premier say to people like Don?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, my honourable colleague knows that there are provisions in here that address executive compensation in a very specific way. We'll freeze them for another couple of years. I say, and I think we've been pretty clear on this, Speaker, if my honourable colleague has any specific proposals related to that, we'd be very pleased to receive those.

But again, I think the best way for us to move forward on this is to receive the package in its entirety so that we can properly consider it, rather than a series of independent proposals or demands. I think what we owe to Ontarians is careful consideration of any proposal that we receive, and so we look forward to receiving the package in its entirety.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Leslie from Oakville says the following: "The deficit should be borne by those that can shoulder it, not the most vulnerable."

Speaker, people are scrambling right now and they're struggling through tough times, and they're worried that this budget is going to make their lives even harder instead of helping them prepare for the future. They don't want to see politicians drawing lines in the sand, but they do want to be heard. Can they count on this Premier to keep an open mind and to be open to solutions that could make this budget a little more fair?

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**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we remain open and, as I say, we look forward to a full package of proposals that my honourable colleague would like to put forward. But the fact of the matter is, Speaker, that when we have the tremendous honour and privilege of sitting on your right-hand side, we bear a heavy responsibility. We have done everything we could to make sure that this budget is informed by the right choices and informed by values that Ontarians share. We protect our schools, we protect our health care, we commit ourselves to balancing by 2017-18 and we commit ourselves to laying a stronger foundation for new jobs and new growth.

So I say to my honourable colleague, we're going to look very carefully at any costs associated with the measures that she is putting forward. I said that before, Speaker; I'll say it again. Having said that, I look forward to receiving a full package of proposals.

### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. The Auditor General said that what he saw going on at Ornge and the lack of oversight by the Ministry of Health didn't pass the smell test. His nose told him that.

Well, the stench got worse this morning when the member from Willowdale brought it into the hearing room. Not one witness was able to come forward to give testimony this morning because of the member's stalling tactics. Now, we're told that he was put up to it by the political operatives in the Premier's office. What I would like to know from the Premier is, what is it that they're



trying to hide on behalf of the Premier? Will the Premier tell us why the stalling tactics to keep witnesses from coming forward?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Order. Thank you.

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we review the facts of what happened this morning. I think all members of the House recognize the fact that the public accounts committee has a right to look into the Ornge investigation. In fact, members from all parties have given it the mandate to do that.

At the same time, we recognize there is an OPP investigation into Ornge. We also recognize the fact that witnesses before the committee have been asked to swear an oath. As a result of that, with the advice of the clerk, the committee agreed to hire counsel for the committee to respect the OPP investigation and to protect witnesses under oath.

This morning there was discussion in the committee brought forward by members of all parties on how we can best use the counsel to protect the investigation and protect—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** It was a pure stalling tactic on the part of the government, Speaker. That counsel was hired on Monday. If in fact what they wanted was to have discussion with counsel, every member of the committee would have been willing to meet with that counsel 24 hours from the time that she was appointed, which would have taken us to last night. The fact of the matter is, this has nothing to do with consultation with counsel. It has everything to do with obstruction of the work of that committee.

I want to know from the Premier, will he interfere? Will he step up and will he appoint a select committee of the Legislature, that this Legislature expressed its will to have, so that we can get on with the business of getting to the bottom of what happened at Ornge?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, yet again we encounter the double standard. For weeks we have heard from the opposition about the protection of witnesses, about witnesses needing to come forward and feel that they have the proper protection in front of the committee.

We went to great lengths today to make sure that the counsel was being properly used by the committee. Mr. Speaker, do you know what the member from Newmarket-Aurora did? He put forward a motion to have the counsel fired. That is the double standard of the opposition. They don't want the protection for witnesses, they don't want the protection for committee and to protect a very serious OPP investigation.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Thank you.

New question.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do not have the capacity to name individuals in what I heard—I'm sorry, I don't mean "name"; I mean, "identify" members who were saying those words that were unparliamentary. I would count on each member's dignity to withdraw that and not to use it again.

New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Premier. Liberal MPPs went out of their way this morning to delay a committee looking into Ornge, just as the former Minister of Health and other government officials were about to testify. Did the Premier's office direct his MPPs to stall the committee and delay a key witness from testifying about the Ornge scandal?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Once again, let's look at the facts.

I think every member of this House recognizes that there is an important OPP investigation going on into the Ornge situation at the same time as hearings are happening in front of public accounts.

There is precedent in this Legislature to have a counsel at the committee to help witnesses who are, for the first time in many years, under oath and to make sure that we do not jeopardize the OPP investigation.

Efforts were made this morning to ensure that the counsel's role was properly defined and that the counsel was made available to all members, and all the opposition could do was put forward a motion to see that counsel fired—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member for Peterborough, come to order. He's answering the question.

**Hon. John Milloy:**—in the case of very, very important deliberations which, as I say, could potentially impact an OPP investigation. What went on this morning was the responsible protection of the committee's work as well as the OPP investigation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Again, my question is to the Premier. There's little doubt that these delay tactics were indeed intentional, and knowing the heavy-handed reputation of the Office of the Premier, we all know what's going on here. Why are the McGuinty Liberals obstructing this committee from getting to the truth of what happened at Ornge, and why is the Premier's office stalling this investigation?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, a double standard. We have heard for weeks that we need a committee process to look into the Ornge situation which protects witnesses. We've heard for weeks about the OPP investigation.

There is a strong parliamentary tradition that when a standing committee is looking into a matter which is at the same time being investigated by the police, measures are taken to make sure that there is no interference. That is why a counsel was hired, and that is why we spent this morning trying to define a proper role for the counsel.

The only thing that that member's party could do was support the member from Newmarket—Aurora, who tried to fire the counsel who was offering support to that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### HYDRO OPERATIONS

**Ms. Soo Wong:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, Ontario's electricity agencies play an integral role in the production of Ontario's electricity supply, as well as the management and planning of our electricity system. In these uncertain economic times, it is vital that all of our agencies, including those in the electricity sector, are operating in an efficient manner. I know that my constituents in Scarborough—Agincourt want their electricity agencies to maintain reliability in the system while at the same time managing costs.

Minister, can you please tell the House what is being done to ensure that our electricity agencies are being run as efficiently as possible without sacrificing the reliability of the system?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member for Scarborough—Agincourt is absolutely right. The energy agencies in Ontario have been taking us from the brownouts that we inherited in 2003 to making sure that we have a very reliable system, from the aging infrastructure to a more modern system, and they've been doing it in a way that's taking costs out of the system in order to best manage the rates.

I'll give you a few examples. Ontario Power Generation has launched an initiative to take \$600 million out of their operating costs over the next four years. The independent electricity operator has been reducing its cost by \$23 million over the past seven years, and it's a very, very small agency. The Ontario Power Authority has improved their efficiency by reducing their budget by 4.1%. All of this is in contrast to where the last party, the party opposite, left us, which, in seven months, after they blew up Ontario Hydro, saw hydro rates go up 30% in seven months—their failed experiment.

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We're repairing the system, improving the infrastructure and helping to manage the costs over the long term.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thank you, Minister. I'm glad to see that in these difficult economic times, you're ensuring that Ontario ratepayers are protected.

I know that Hydro One has been at the forefront of our efforts to rebuild the dirty, outdated and unreliable energy system we inherited from the opposition in 2003. Last week, Minister, you informed the House that Hydro One has replaced over 5,000 kilometres of transmission lines. That is an impressive accomplishment.

Minister, can you please share with the House some of the cost-saving measures Hydro One has taken to protect ratepayers, while at the same time making the needed upgrades and investments to our energy system?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member is right, once again: We started in 2003 with the brownouts, with the dirty coal and with infrastructure that had not been upgraded as it should be for many, many years.

So Hydro One has been working really hard: 5,000 kilometres of wire—that takes you from here to the Yukon, to Whitehorse—being upgraded and new wire. That ensures reliability. But what else are they doing? They've taken almost \$200 million in costs out of their operation over the past couple of years alone—\$200 million. They've managed to reduce rates below what they otherwise would have been.

And they're doing something else: They're improving and upgrading the infrastructure from the old technology that they were left with in 2003. They have been investing on behalf of the people to have a modern, reliable, up-to-date system for today and for the future. That's the responsible way to go.

### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Premier. This morning, we saw a shameful attempt by this Liberal government to do everything they can to obstruct and delay the investigation into Ornge, and they used Mr. Zimmer to do so. This is on top of all of the other tactics. Now, when Mr. Zimmer was asked to explain if all the dodging and delaying was to protect the Premier, he got visibly upset and he stammered out, "No, no, no."

My question to the Premier today: Is this to protect the Premier and this government?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. I'd like to make a comment. First, as is the convention in this place, we reference people's ridings, please, and second of all—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member will withdraw that comment.

**Interjection:** I'll withdraw that, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I do understand—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew will come to order, please.

I understand that there are things being said back and forth that I may not pick up, and it's because the members have decided to yell back and forth. Even when I'm standing beside people here, there are times where I cannot hear, and that's not conducive to this place being able to conduct its business, particularly mine, where I'm supposed to hear things that are going on in this House. If I can't hear them, I can't respond or react to them. So I'm asking you—this is a very serious situation that we're talking about, and I acknowledge that, but let's keep the language down in terms of the volume, and let's let each other ask and answer the questions appropriately.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, to the Minister of Community and Social Services.



**Hon. John Milloy:** I don't think there's any member of this House who would disagree with the fact that the situation at Ornge is a very serious one. We have had questions in this House. We have a committee which is looking into it. We have an OPP investigation. We had a detailed Auditor General's report coming forward.

The list of witnesses that have been put together is a very robust list. Those witnesses are being asked to appear under oath. We don't know for sure, but some of those witnesses may be part—their testimony may in fact impact on an OPP investigation.

The only responsible course, as has been the precedent for other committees of this Legislature, is to have a counsel that has been appointed. This morning, with the help of government members, there was discussion at the committee about the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to try the Premier again, but I would say that the exercise this morning was insulting to counsel. She was quite aware of her responsibilities and was prepared to exercise them appropriately.

But let's get back to who was in that room this morning. Who was sent to the committee? The director of legislative affairs to the Premier, the chief of staff to the House leader, two media specialists, senior Liberal caucus researcher, senior adviser to the House leader. I ask the Premier today, what is behind this attempt to delay and obstruct the work of the committee from getting to the truth? Why will you not be held accountable? What are you trying to hide?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we are not in the habit of setting up—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

**Hon. John Milloy:** We are not in the habit of setting up political witch hunts or kangaroo courts. We have respect for the standing committees of this Legislature, which are looking into a matter which is also the subject of an OPP investigation.

What was truly shocking this morning was when the member from Newmarket–Aurora attempted to fire the counsel that had been retained by the committee. This is a serious investigation by the public accounts committee, and we need to ensure that both the OPP investigation and witnesses before that committee receive the consideration, receive the protection that is due to them.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Premier. It should come as no surprise to the Premier that there are ongoing questions about the credibility of his health minister. Asked on March 21 whether there were red flags in the January 2011 letter, the Minister of Health

said, “Yes, of course.” But by March 28, the minister denied seeing any issues at all. On February 29, she said, “We fired the board and have replaced them.” But last week, the minister said the board voluntarily resigned. Does the Premier agree that the credibility of his health minister is quickly fading?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think the Auditor General himself has acknowledged that we took concrete, substantive action when we became aware of the problems at Ornge. In fact, even the member from Newmarket–Aurora described us as taking very aggressive action.

The point is, when we became aware that there was a problem at Ornge, I acted. We do have a completely new board at Ornge, we have completely new leadership at Ornge and that new team at Ornge is making a profound difference for the operations at Ornge. Their first focus is patient safety. They're making a demonstrable difference on patient safety. They are winding down the for-profits. Some are already wound down; others are in the process of being wound down. We have a new performance agreement, and I've introduced legislation. I think the people in this province expected me to take action, and I did that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** When faced with some tough questions about why the health minister didn't respond to the obvious red flags, the government blamed the opposition MPPs and has even called into question the integrity of the Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Why is the Premier blaming everyone else but his own health minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The Minister of Health has had an opportunity to appear in front of the public accounts committee. She was asked for an hour; she in fact spent two and a half hours there. She talked about the action that she took to address this situation.

At the same time, there have been questions raised from the opposition about the so-called red flags. The government has put forward a series of motions wanting to hear from opposition members who had meetings with Ornge, who received detailed written briefings from Ornge. The Chair of the committee had a two-hour tour of Ornge, accompanied by a very prominent conservative lobbyist who is in fact part of the opposition leader's campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I think, again—we cannot be held to a double standard here. If questions are about what red flags were on the government side, it's equally legitimate for the government to ask what were the red flags on the opposition side.

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#### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Grant Crack:** My question is to the Minister of Government Services. In our budget of 2009, the government committed to reducing the size of the Ontario

public service by 5%. We made this commitment to streamline government services and to help balance the budget.

Can the minister please update us on how the government is doing in reaching that target?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to thank the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Our government is absolutely committed to balancing the budget. We had to make hard but right choices, and one of those choices is to reduce the size of the Ontario public service. It's never easy to reduce that size, but I'm very, very pleased to inform the House that as of March 31, 2011, we have met our target of—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** We have done so through attrition and also managing of our vacancies in the Ontario public service.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** It's nice to be able to ask a question and not be heckled from the other side.

I'm happy to hear that the government has achieved our target of 5% reduction in the Ontario public service. In the budget of 2011, our government committed to a further 2% reduction in the Ontario public service by 2014.

Can the minister tell us if the government is still on track to meeting this target and if we can expect to see these reductions affecting services that Ontarians have come to rely on?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to thank the member again for asking the question.

The Ontario public service provides very important service to Ontarians on a daily basis, and I am very proud of our Ontario public service. But we do have a target to reduce our Ontario public service by 2% as we go on further. In this budget, we have been able to identify that two thirds of the target that we have set for ourselves will be met through the reduction in this budget.

We will work with our Ontario public service to identify the other opportunities—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** —so we can balance the budget by 2017-18.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. The government House leader continues to use as an excuse the fact that there is an OPP investigation going on into the scandal at Ornge for the delay tactics that his backbenchers are using at the public accounts committee.

I want to remind the House leader and the Premier that in the federal Liberals' Adscam scandal there were three things going on at the same time. The public accounts review of Sheila Fraser's report was going on, an RCMP

investigation was going on, and eventually a full public inquiry, the Gomery commission, was going on.

Members here know full well what the parameters of our investigation are. Will the Premier call off those obstructionist tactics and let us get on with the business of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind members of the House that the government members voted—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** This is the example I was talking to you about. I'm standing right here, and I can't hear.

Minister?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the members of the House—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew will now come to order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I would like to remind—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And York.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I would like to remind members of the House that the government side voted to have the public accounts committee look into the Ornge situation. We have begun hearings. This is a very serious matter because of the fact that there is an OPP investigation. No one has suggested that we not have hearings, but we suggest that we follow the proper procedures so that the investigation is protected.

I would also point out that the recommendation to have counsel to the committee came from the clerk of the committee, and the honourable member was undermining the recommendation of the clerk when he moved a motion to have counsel fired. We do not want a kangaroo court. We want to get to the bottom of this in a way—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Well, Mr. Speaker, surely the government House leader is embarrassed by having to recite those speaking lines that he's been given by the Premier's office. We were fully in support of having counsel. That was a decision made by the committee itself. What we oppose is the member from Willowdale using that counsel to obstruct the work of the committee. That is why I passed a motion to say, let's get rid of the counsel for now; let's have that same counsel attend at the select committee of the Legislature that was voted for by this House, because that is what we need to get to the bottom of this mess.

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I am just flabbergasted by the double standard—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** If anyone wonders if there is a moment when I do get a little frustrated, this is it.

Minister?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I'm quite frankly flabbergasted by the double standard of this member. He stands up here day after day doing his best Perry Mason impersonation, talking about the seriousness of the Ornge situation. We agree it is serious. It is particularly serious because the Ontario Provincial Police are also looking into the matter.

We want counsel. We want counsel that is properly protecting witnesses and protecting the work of the committee. There are precedents for this. Both the Gigantes and Martel hearings had counsel. That counsel's role was properly defined. Mr. Speaker, the action that was taken this morning by the member to have the counsel fired was reprehensible.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, you'll know that there was a tragic fatality in Timmins this week with the death of a miner at Lake Shore Gold. Unfortunately, it follows on the step of a whole bunch of other tragedies in communities like Sudbury and other communities across Ontario that are in the mining business. We have an Occupational Health and Safety Act that was created some 30 years ago, and you know that the Steelworkers have asked for a review of that act so that we can take a look at what the coroners' inquests have done in each of those deaths, look at the trends to see what changes we can make to the Occupational Health and Safety Act so that we can make our workplaces safer.

Premier, I'm asking you today, will you start such a review?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for his question. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** My thoughts certainly go out to the family and the co-workers of the worker who was killed in that tragic accident. I can't imagine how difficult the situation is for the family of that young worker. No one in this province should go to work in the morning and be fearful that they won't return home safely. That's why my ministry is committed to working to improve health and safety in Ontario mines and workplaces across this province.

As a Ministry of Labour investigation is ongoing, it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the specifics of this case, but what I can say is that the investigation will be thorough and comprehensive, because I

believe that's what the family members of the deceased worker expect, and that's what we're going to do. While the mining industry is fundamentally a very dangerous and hazardous activity, the ministry has achieved some of the lowest injury rates in the province. But every injury or fatality is one too many.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, I agree that one injury is way too many and one fatality is way too many, but nobody here is asking you to interfere with the investigation of the tragedy that happened this week. What we're saying is that, over the last 30 years, there's a body of knowledge that has been created by coroners' inquests that have investigated the deaths in mining in Ontario. What we're asking and what the Steelworkers and the families are asking for is that we look at that body of information so that we can take a look at how we can improve the Occupational Health and Safety Act so that workers going to work tomorrow will know that it is a safer place.

I ask you again, Minister—I'm not asking you to comment on this investigation. I'm asking, will you undertake a commitment to do a review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act by looking at those coroners' inquests that have already been done so that we can strengthen health and safety in this province and, hopefully, prevent these types of tragedies from happening again?

1130

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I appreciate the passion of the member. Certainly, we continue to work to bring forward new regulations to improve health and safety. Back in January of this year, we brought several changes that came into force that aim to improve and update training requirements, more occupational noise limits and improve exposure requirements.

We want to work with the industry, with labour, to strike a balance between ensuring compliance and helping workplaces achieve healthy and safe environments.

We also make the mining industry a priority in doing health and safety blitzes. Last year alone, we visited 180 mining workplaces, and since 2009 we've visited 5,000.

We want the same thing: to make sure that every worker who goes to work in the morning comes home safe and sound. Certainly we have now a chief prevention officer who's working quickly with our enforcement division to find new and better ways to reach employers and workers.

But our work is not done. Our ministry will continue to work hard every day to make workers safer—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. My constituents in Oak Ridges—Markham have heard a lot about our budget tabled last week, but they haven't heard much about how our plan will impact law enforcement.

Although everyone has concerns about their own and their family's safety, most people in York region recog-

nize that crime is on the decline in our community and that Ontario is now the safest province in Canada, and I'm sure we all want to keep it that way.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, what measures will your ministry be taking to keep our community safe, and have you explored other means to find efficiencies, given our fiscal situation?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, I want to thank the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for a very good question.

Thankfully, we have found other ways to achieve savings. Our budget includes a plan for 100 civilians to perform data entry, which would otherwise be conducted by OPP officers. It is estimated that every one civilian frees up the equivalent of 2.5 front-line officers' time, so that means 250 more OPP officers will be spending more time providing front-line police services. This will create 100 good-paying jobs for Ontarians, so an increase in job creation, and reduce police officer overtime.

This plan, along with all the other budget components, benefits the province of Ontario. The opposition should put the interests of Ontarians ahead of their own political interests and work with us to move our five-year plan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My constituents in Oak Ridges–Markham, like most Ontarians, realize salaries and overtime make up the bulk of public sector expenses, including the OPP budget, and it appears the civilian data entry plan is a start to making everyday operations more cost-effective. However, other costly items for this service include the equipment the OPP needs on a daily basis, especially things like patrol vehicles. The fleet must be a great expense, with the maintenance costs for everyday wear and tear and the frequent turnover of vehicles in order to meet replacement targets.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, is there a plan to reduce the cost of the OPP patrol vehicle fleet?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Good question. As part of our ongoing efforts to find efficiencies and cost savings, my ministry is looking at potentially raising the kilometre threshold for replacing OPP vehicles. The recent advancements in vehicle technology, engineering and warranties have enabled OPP fleet vehicles to stay on the road longer while ensuring our police officer safety.

The McGuinity government is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all Ontarians. We are also committed to balancing our budget by 2017-18, and we are on track.

This budget is about choices, to eliminate the deficit, create jobs and protect the gains we have made in education and health care. It will take all of us together to achieve those goals through our five-year plan for the budget.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** To the Premier: It's become clear that the Liberal delay tactics at the public accounts

hearing into Ornge are to protect the Premier and those in his office. On the witness list today was George Smitherman, the same George Smitherman the Premier protected during the eHealth scandal. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, what is the Premier trying to hide by preventing George Smitherman from testifying under oath today?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think the answer to the question is the question itself. Mr. Smitherman was asked to appear in front of the committee under oath, as were all witnesses asked to appear, in a situation when we have an ongoing OPP investigation.

I think most members, if not all members, would agree that it would be prudent to have counsel there to advise witnesses and advise the committee so that this very serious discussion, these very serious testimonies are protected, so that members are protected. But instead, the member from Newmarket–Aurora—and I read the motion he put forward. He said, "That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts direct the clerk of the committee to dismiss legal counsel retained to provide advice to the committee."

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Well, I'll go to the Premier again. It's becoming more and more obvious when you take a look at the other witnesses who were to be there today that they also are very close to the Premier. We had Jamison Steeve, the Premier's principal secretary, and we had Cathy Worden, one of his senior advisers. They were there. You've been trying to avoid them from appearing because of your delay tactics today.

My question would be, why are you delaying getting to the truth and avoiding the appearance of these witnesses?

**Hon. John Milloy:** We are not cavalier about the rights of all witnesses. We are not cavalier—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** What are they covering?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Durham, come to order, please.

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we are not cavalier about the rights of witnesses. We are not cavalier about an OPP investigation. I know the member would never want to suggest that we should somehow undermine an OPP investigation or undermine the rights of the witness. That is why, on the advice of the clerk, we supported the appointment of a legal counsel to the committee, and the discussions this morning were on how that counsel could best serve the members of the committee—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question. The member from—Nickel Belt.

#### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Very good, Mr. Speaker. Ma question est pour le premier ministre. J'ai eu récemment



l'occasion de rencontrer les membres de l'ACFO de Durham-Peterborough. Ils sont venus me voir pour parler de la désignation de la ville d'Oshawa et de la région de Durham comme région désignée sous la Loi sur les services en français. Je ne vous apprendrai rien, monsieur le Premier Ministre, en vous disant qu'il y a beaucoup de francophones qui demeurent dans la région de Durham. Cette région dépassera bientôt les 40 000 francophones et ils ont une demande bien ficelée qui vous a été faite à votre gouvernement. Combien de temps encore devront-ils attendre?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Alors, je veux—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister responsible for francophone affairs—Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, to the minister.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Sorry, I was too quick.

Je veux remercier la députée de Nickel Belt pour sa question et aussi son appui à la francophonie en Ontario. Oui, j'ai reçu des demandes de trois différentes régions qui veulent avoir la désignation. Alors, on est en période de consultation. On a rencontré les députés de l'opposition pour expliquer la demande et le processus va suivre son cours. Merci.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm looking around and seeing smiles, so I'll just carry on.

Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Je dois dire que cette demande de désignation est vraiment bien soutenue. Que l'on parle au député d'Oshawa ou à la députée de Whitby-Oshawa, ou même à la députée de Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, ils ont tous écrit en faveur de cette demande de désignation.

J'ai eu l'occasion de parler avec M. Robert Fillion. M. Fillion fait partie de l'ACFO de la région depuis 30 ans. Ça fait 30 ans que ces gens-là travaillent et veulent aller de l'avant pour promouvoir les services en français dans leur région.

J'ai également eu l'occasion de parler à la présidente, M<sup>me</sup> Sylvie Landry, et au vice-président, M. André Savard. On a un groupe de francophones engagés qui ont fait beaucoup de travail sur le terrain. Il n'y a aucune opposition. Les gens sont prêts. Combien de temps encore devra-t-on attendre avant d'avoir la région de Durham désignée?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Sous les deux gouvernements précédents, il y avait une procédure qui était très laborieuse, c'est-à-dire qu'on devait avoir 10 % de la communauté qui parlait français, ou 5 000 dans une autre communauté.

Ce qu'on a fait avec la région de Kingston, c'est que, lorsque les francophones veulent avoir la désignation, ce qu'on leur demande est de demander à leur député provincial, fédéral et à d'autres politiciens dans leur région pour voir s'ils approuvent la demande. Ensuite, nous poursuivons ça. Alors, nous avons facilité cette procédure.

Oui, on est en consultation. Ce n'est pas tous les députés qui ont envoyé une lettre appuyant la demande; ils nous ont envoyé une lettre, mais pas appuyant la

demande. Alors, on demande l'appui des députés et ensuite on va procéder.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** In the gallery today, we have an outstanding member in the 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments: the member from Algoma, Bud Wildman.

The member from Mississauga East-Cooksville on a point of order.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'd like to introduce some very special guests today. I have over here Kurt Uriarte, who is the VP of Peel region for ETFO, and who was very helpful during my campaign; as well, Catherine Soplet and Jyothi Makam, who also volunteered during my campaign, and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. We welcome our guests.

I will use this time as a reminder that we are introducing guests, and introducing guests only.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Mr. Speaker, I have quite a long list of guests that are here today to pay tribute to Pat Hayes. If you will indulge me, I'll try to get through them as quickly as possible: Rose Claire Hayes, Michael Hayes, Johanne Beaudoin, David Hayes, James Hayes, Steven Hayes, Matthew Beaudoin-Hayes, Cameron Beaudoin-Hayes, Connor Sunderland, Melissa Hayes, Ella Hayes, Dorothy Hayes, Gloria Reaume, James Reaume, Marilyn Craig, Nancy McCoy, Jack McCoy, Peter Hayes, Bill Hayes, Bea Hayes, JoAnn Hayes, Theresa Hayes, Elizabeth Hayes, Paige Hayes, Dawn Marie St. Louis, Amanda St. Louis, David St. Louis, Terry St. Louis, Sherry Drouillard, Shania Drouillard, Jessica McCoy, Lennie Craig, Julie Craig, Brendan Craig, Josh Craig, Kim Verbeek, Steve Verbeek, Damian Verbeek, Cassidy Verbeek, Euclid Benoit, Boris and Sheila Natyshak, Bobby Baylis, Helle Little, Jeanie Haagen-Herbert, Joseph Byrne, Kathleen Anderson, Rachelle Sadler, Angela Veeraraghavan, Roy Wilkinson, Marie France Wilkinson, Howard Hampton, David Warner, Bud Wildman, Larry O'Connor, Ross McClellan, Larry French and Stephanie Levesque, among many others. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to welcome them to the Legislature today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We do welcome all of our guests, and we obviously pay tribute to the former members that are here as well, and the former Speaker.

I would also say that Hansard is very grateful to the member from Essex. Hansard will appreciate that.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to introduce and welcome to the House this afternoon the national director of policy for the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation, Derek Fildebrandt, joining with us in the members' gallery.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to recognize a good friend of mine and a member of the Ontario Legislature from 1990 to 1995, Larry O'Connor. Welcome, Larry.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We'd like to welcome the former member for being here. Thank you.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's a great privilege for me to introduce a friend and colleague of mine from a few years ago, Mr. Brad Smith. Brad is the director of client services for a company here in Toronto, Priority Management.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** As critic for consumer services, I have the duty, amongst many, to monitor the efficacy and fairness of the Cemeteries Act and the act that will replace it this July.

Recently, a family that began building its dream home in the county of Brant found themselves instead digging into a figurative nightmare. When workers found human remains, this law-abiding family called the police. Had foul play been involved, at the conclusion of the forensic tests, the remains would have been taken away by ambulance. Instead, with no crime involved, the Cemeteries Act came into play, opening up nothing short of a financial sinkhole where there should have been a foundation.

As the act requires, the registrar ordered an archaeological assessment to identify the scope of the site. These assessments must be done by a limited number of private companies that charge heavily for the service. The act provides no standard and no measure to allow a determination by the registrar that the \$15,000-and-over assessment fee would impose an undue financial burden on the affected citizens. Aside from making the landowner liable for all costs of moving and reburying the remains, the act is vague on exactly what to do or how to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, this is unfair to citizens, when a dishonest person can throw away found bones into a garbage pile and save money while an honest one must be left to hope that the property is a crime scene rather than a resting place.

There are plenty of solutions to this problem that do not involve extra spending. There are many people, institutions and organizations in the province with sufficient qualifications to do the same assessments, at a much lower cost. I had—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I thank the member for his statement.

### SUICIDE PREVENTION

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I rise on an occasion of great sadness. I'd like to share this with the House. Last week, it was reported that three students who attended schools in my riding of Bramalea–Gore–Malton have committed

suicide since November 2011, so I extend my deepest condolences to their family and friends.

The tragedy of a young person dying speaks to a serious lack on the part of our community and of our society. It's truly a great loss when we lose a young person with so much hope and so much potential.

Just some facts I'd like to share with the House: Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 to 24, and 73% of hospital admissions for attempted suicides are for people between the ages of 15 and 44.

The Canadian Mental Health Association has indicated a wide range of behaviours or signals, including depression, drastic behaviour or mood swings, or self-destructive behaviour, that are exhibited before this occurs.

Research shows that 90% of people who kill themselves have a diagnosable disease, some mental health illness issues. So it's incumbent that we address this issue by addressing it through education, through early diagnosis, through investing in social programs and health care programs so that we don't have to see this happen again in our schools, in our ridings across Ontario, across the world. Preventative programs are the way to address this, because I don't want to see this happen again. I don't want there to be another members' statement, for someone else in this House to rise and speak on this issue.

Again, my heart goes out to the families, and we must do something to address mental health issues, particularly when it comes to youth, who are our future.

### CITY OF PETERBOROUGH

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Today was a great day for Peterborough here at Queen's Park. Thank you to anyone who took the time to drop by my annual event. There's a wide range of companies and organizations from our area that truly demonstrate the diversity and economic strength that Peterborough has to offer.

If you attended today, you have met the presidents of both Trent University and Sir Sandford Fleming College. You've learned about our ongoing expansion of Peterborough regional airport. The Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corp. would have provided you with business information and tourism locations. Peterborough Green-Up helps residents of Peterborough reduce their footprint on the environment; they offer great support and information on living green. You've had the opportunity to taste beer produced by Publican House Brewery, located right in the heart of Peterborough.

We're very fortunate in our area to be the home of an excellent winery, and samples of their wonderful products were on hand today. Black Honey offered excellent baked treats. The longest lineup was at the Kawartha Dairy table, where the best ice cream in the world was available for sampling.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on, but there isn't enough time to mention everyone who attended today to



showcase Peterborough and what we have to offer. I'm proud of my riding and happy that today everyone here had the opportunity to catch a glimpse of what it's like to be from Peterborough and why we're so very proud of our great community.

#### FRED WEST

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased today to be wearing the Vimy Ridge pin. This commemorates Canada's momentous victory at Vimy Ridge on April 9, 1917.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in honour of Royal Canadian Legions across Ontario, but more specifically Branch 178 in Bowmanville in my riding of Durham.

On this Sunday, April 8, the Legion will be holding an official ceremony to name their main meeting room the Fred West Hall. This is in honour of a World War I veteran, Fred West.

I had the distinct privilege of knowing Fred. He was the last surviving World War I veteran of that branch, 178. He passed away at the age of 101 in the year 2000.

Fred West served in the 117th Battalion from the Eastern Townships, and then in the 14th Battalion of the Royal Montreal Regiment. Fred received a number of medals for his distinguished service, including the medal of bravery and the bar. Later in life, he was awarded the Legion of Honour from France.

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Thank you to Legion historian John Haslam for his work on this project and to Jim Connell, past president of the Legion and a district governor.

Fred epitomized the self-sacrifice that was so common amongst that young Canadian generation. He continued to serve his community throughout his entire life. The naming of the hall in his honour will be a continuing reminder of our now-departed comrades who have served in all the wars or in defence of Canada.

I'd like to thank and take this opportunity to commend Branch 178 President Rick Saunders and all the members for their strong leadership in building strong communities and in respect for our country.

I'm proud to say that I am an honorary member of that Legion, and I stand today and say: We shall remember them.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Yesterday in Texas, 12 tornadoes tore through that state, ripping apart homes, devastating communities, and disrupting transportation networks. It's a reminder that although we are preoccupied with many other things these days, the climate issue has not gone away. The world continues to heat up, and there are consequences for communities who are going to be directly affected.

In this province, we are doing little or nothing to prepare. At the beginning of March, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario brought forward the report

Ready for Change? An Assessment of Ontario's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. There were a number of interesting elements in the report. There were no time-tables. There was no assignment of responsibility. He pointed out that we can expect more severe ice storms and disruption of our electricity system in winter in the future. We aren't preparing for that. We aren't preparing for a drop in the level of the Great Lakes, which is going to affect our hydroelectricity potential. We're not preparing for the impact in the north, where we will see far more forest fires and far less access to the north in winter on ice roads.

We face a huge challenge. We have been acting as if we were asleep. The government has to wake up and start taking action on climate change, both to stop it and to adapt to it.

#### PARAMOUNT FINE FOODS

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** Recently, I had the opportunity of attending the opening of a second location of Paramount Fine Foods in my great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South. The CEO, Mohammad Fakhri, is a true immigrant success story: a recent immigrant who brought with him the skills of a successful entrepreneur.

Paramount has opened five restaurants in Mississauga, Toronto and Thornhill, specializing in Lebanese and Middle Eastern cuisine, and is planning to open many more. The company has created more than 280 new full-time jobs. The new Paramount Butcher Shop in my riding has not only brought quality halal meats, poultry and deli, but it has also brought 30 new jobs to my riding.

I would like to congratulate Mohammad Fakhri and all the employees of Paramount Fine Foods for their continued dedication and hard work. Small businesses and risk-takers like Mohammad are indeed the backbone of Ontario's economy and deserve our support and appreciation.

#### DIG SAFE MONTH

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Last spring, the Senate of Canada proclaimed April as Safe Digging Month. Once again this April, many groups are hosting safe-digging educational events across Ontario.

On April 2, the official Dig Safe kickoff event, put on by the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance, was held at Ottawa city hall to encourage homeowners and contractors in the capital region to always call to locate before they dig to prevent injuries, property damage and costly power outages.

This year, in addition to attending Dig Safe events in this communities, members of this Legislature can show their support for a safer Ontario by supporting Bill 8, my bill, the Ontario One Call Act, 2011, that is currently before the Standing Committee on General Government.

Bill 8 will create a single, not-for-profit call centre in Ontario that residents and contractors can contact free of charge to access locate information on any utilities or

underground infrastructure in the area where they plan to dig.

Mr. Speaker, by supporting Bill 8, this Legislature will be listening to a large and growing group of supporters that want this government to make public and worker safety a priority in Ontario. I'd like to thank my co-sponsor, Mr. Miller from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Thank you, and again: Always call before you dig.

### NOISE POLLUTION

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** For over a year, thousands of Windsor residents have been experiencing a hum, a low-level vibration that at times is powerful enough to rattle windows and move objects in the home. The hum is having a significant impact on the quality of life of my constituents.

Last month, over 20,000 people took part in a telephone town hall on this issue. Both the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources Canada have conducted studies that confirm the vibration is an acoustic noise originating in or near Zug Island in the city of Rouge River, Michigan. Since this finding, officials of all levels of government have called on the city of Rouge River to intervene to resolve the concern. No action has been forthcoming. My office continues to get calls and a Facebook page has been established to record concerns.

This past Thursday, Minister Bradley sent official correspondence to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, encouraging them to intervene. This issue has made international headlines, has required countless public fora and has resulted in thousands of complaints being filed.

The long and prosperous relationship between Ontario and Michigan surely warrants action and intervention by our neighbours during this time of need. I urge both federal and state agencies to engage in the issue and take action to resolve the thousands of concerns.

### GASOLINE TAX

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Tomorrow, in private members' business, my private member's bill, Bill 27, an act to change the transportation act with respect to the rebates that municipalities receive from the Ministry of Transportation, will be debated here in the Legislature.

This is not the first time that I will have brought this bill to the Legislature. In fact, it's the umpteenth—I'm not sure exactly how many times, but at least several times. The reason I keep bringing it back is, the government keeps voting it down.

This is a fundamental issue of fairness to rural people. The gas tax that people pay—everybody pays the same amount when they gas up at the pumps, but rural people pay a disproportionate amount of gas tax because they have to use more gasoline.

I've been here for almost nine years. I can get around the city of Toronto and not own a car, but where I come

from, where I live, in Barry's Bay in Renfrew county, you can't get around without a car.

It is time that the people of this Legislature recognize that it is a fundamental issue of fairness. I'm hoping that tomorrow, when Bill 27 is debated, all members of this House will stand and recognize that, in spite of the fact that you're hitting rural people again with increased driver's licence fees and plate fees, it's time to recognize that they need a fair share of that gas tax as well. I hope they'll support my bill.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### ONTARIO'S WOOD FIRST ACT, 2012

##### LOI DE 2012 PRIVILÉGIANT LE BOIS EN ONTARIO

Mr. Mauro moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 61, An Act to enact the Ontario's Wood First Act, 2012 and to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 with respect to wood frame buildings / *Projet de loi 61, Loi édictant la Loi de 2012 privilégiant le bois en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment en ce qui a trait aux bâtiments à ossature de bois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** We all know that over the last 10 years in Canada, the forestry sector has lost significant jobs—in BC and Quebec, huge job losses, and Ontario not far behind, especially in northern Ontario.

**1520**

The attempt with this bill is actually twofold. The first part of the bill is attempting to promote the use of wood in buildings in Ontario that receive some level of provincial funding. The second goal of the bill is to amend the building code to allow for the use of wood when it comes to six-storey buildings of certain building classifications.

This is completely consistent with what we did a year or two ago as a Liberal government, where we began a consultation through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on potentially amending the building code.

#### LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT OF REGULATIONS ACT, 2012

##### LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SURVEILLANCE LÉGISLATIVE DES RÈGLEMENTS

Mr. Nicholls moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 62, An Act to provide for the legislative oversight of regulations / *Projet de loi 62, Loi visant à prévoir la surveillance législative des règlements.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** The Legislative Oversight of Regulations Act, 2012, has two primary functions. First, it will create a registry of every regulation in Ontario and subject all new regulations that affect businesses in Ontario to a cost-benefit analysis. Second, it will ensure, through a yearly audit by the Auditor General, that we are making progress in tackling the excessive red tape that burdens our businesses. I believe this is an important step in helping Ontario get back on the road to economic recovery.

TAXPAYER PROTECTION  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2012  
LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION  
DES CONTRIBUABLES

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 63, An Act to amend the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 63, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la protection des contribuables.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington for a short statement.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for getting that title completely correct. The Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999, presently contains restrictions on introducing a government bill to increase or permit the increase of a tax rate under a tax statute designated in the act, or to give a body or person other than the crown the authority to change the tax rate in a designated tax statute or to levy a new tax.

This bill amends the act to extend those restrictions to a bill that amends those restrictions. This bill also removes the present exemption from those requirements for a bill that gives a municipality the authority to levy a new tax.

COSTING OF PUBLIC BILLS ACT, 2012  
LOI DE 2012 SUR L'ÉTABLISSEMENT  
DES COÛTS DES PROJETS DE LOI  
D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 64, An Act to require the costing of all public bills / Projet de loi 64, Loi exigeant l'établissement des coûts de tous les projets de loi d'intérêt public.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** This bill requires the Minister of Finance to ensure that a detailed and comprehensive costing analysis is done on all public bills that receive first reading. The minister must ensure that a report is prepared that provides an estimate of the financial cost to the government of any proposal in the bill and the methodology used in the costing analysis. The report must be tabled as soon as possible after the bill receives first reading. Second reading debate of the bill cannot occur until the report is tabled in the assembly.

PAT HAYES

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Pat Hayes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister has asked for unanimous consent. Do we have agreement? Agreed? Agreed.

The member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'd like to first thank the members of this assembly for granting unanimous consent to pay tribute to my friend Pat Hayes. It is indeed an honour to stand here today, possibly the greatest honour I've had so far, to acknowledge the life and the contribution of my friend and former NDP MPP for the riding of Essex, Pat Hayes.

Today, Speaker, you will have heard that I welcomed a large contingent of the Hayes family, from all points within the province, to the Legislature today. I'm so proud to welcome Pat's extended family and his friends. If the numbers that came out today show any indication of the support that I have in my riding, I'm anxious for the next election to come around, because I know I have the backing of the wonderful Hayes family with me in every election.

That goes back a long ways, Mr. Speaker. Pat was first elected to this Legislature in 1985, and again in 1990, where he served his constituents until 1995. He was also the warden and the mayor of Lakeshore. He was a proud member of CAW Local 200, a Ford worker, where he was the health and safety rep for many years. He was also a relentless volunteer advocate and volunteered himself, volunteering with Lakeshore Community Service, the Essex Goodfellows, as well as his church, St. Mary's church in Maidstone.

Pat was a tireless advocate for the little guy, Mr. Speaker. There was no one and has been no one that I've ever met who stood so ferociously on the side of those who have been marginalized, who have been oppressed and who have needed help. Maybe it was because of Pat's large presence, charisma and strength that people surrounded him—those who needed help, those who sought a voice for their concerns. Pat was all too willing to do that. People flocked to him because they knew that not only was he always willing to lend a hand, but on many occasions he got resolutions for people. He helped people tremendously. He was emotional about these

issues. The issues around poverty and the issues around workers' rights and health and safety legislation are issues that touched him very deeply.

Through the context of several elections—not only his that I had the pleasure of being a part in, but also my own elections where he was my campaign manager—we talked. We talked a lot, and we talked deeply about the future of this province, the future of this country and how we felt we could best lend our hearts to those issues. It's something that I will treasure for the rest of my life, to know that I had somebody in my corner, somebody that was my mentor, my friend. Indeed, he was a mentor. I am privileged to have known him and to have had him in my life, as so many others are here today that got the chance to know him.

1530

The Hayes-Natyshak connection is somewhat of a mini-dynasty in Essex, I might say. In fact, my mother, Sheila, who's here today, was Pat's constituency assistant.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** As a young lad I got the chance to run around in this place. It's a familiar place for me, thanks to Pat being our member and his election. It's something that, again, I will cherish with me my entire life.

I asked my mom about some thoughts about Pat. I'll read you one quick one. I think the members will find some humour in this. It says:

"Dear Taras,

"The campaign team had a policy of never sending the candidates out on their own so your dad accompanied Pat on many of his ventures. There was an early (6 a.m.) plant gate at a factory in Chatham, so in order to get Pat and Boris there without sending them on the road at 3 a.m., we arranged for them to stay in a motel just off the 401 at Blenheim. They booked in and Pat explained that he had to be at the plant gate early, so he asked for a wake-up call at 5 a.m. The person at the front desk said, 'Fine, no problem.'

My dad, Boris, says, "'Pat, I think we should go and buy an alarm clock.'" The owners of this hotel "'have a Liberal sign out'" on the front lawn, "'and I'm afraid they may deliberately not wake us.'"

"Ever-trusting Pat said, 'Oh,'" Boris, don't worry, "'we will be fine.'

"As the sun crept up through their window late the next morning, Pat woke up to the panicked howl coming from Boris," who said, "'Never trust anyone'" when you have to wake up.

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's those funny anecdotes that I think we all have as members of this Legislature, that are also life-lasting. We carry them with us. As difficult as they may have been, they're great stories in the end.

Pat passed away on May 2, 2011, which was the federal election day. I was a candidate in that election. I woke up that morning and received a call that my good friend had passed away. It literally knocked me off of my

feet. I dropped to my knees, and I, in a selfish way, said, "Why, Pat? Why not tomorrow? Why today? Why did you have to do it to me today?"

In fact, this is a gentleman who had never missed an election since he was 18 years old. After reflection, I figured and I came to terms with the fact that because he couldn't participate from his bed, he left us to be with us in spirit on that day, and I know that he would have been very proud of the accomplishments of our federal party. It's something that I feel and I felt certainly that day, and I continue to feel as I go about my work in this House.

As a mentor, he taught me a lot of things. He taught me three really important lessons. One was to never drive as a candidate during an election, because you will hit someone with your car: "Find someone else to drive."

Number two was that he taught me to go to small gatherings, whether it was a church bazaar or a garage sale, because he said, "They might not know if you were there, but they certainly will know if you weren't there." It's something that certainly my wife can attest to, that I've attended a lot of those types of functions.

The third thing that he said, that I think I carry with me in this House, is that they might not agree with what you say, and sometimes in this House we don't agree with what each other says—they might not agree with what you say, but they will respect the fact that you had the guts to say it. And that's something—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** That's a lesson that I think we can all hold dear and dear to our hearts. I see that in my colleagues in this House, and I certainly respect that in each and every one of us.

As a father figure, which he was to me, he offered me guidance, support, advice and love—all the things that a father does. I'm forever, eternally grateful for that.

As a campaign manager, we figured one election we put 9,000 kilometres on his vehicle during the winter campaign, all along talking, canvassing, a little bit of fun in between, but that's a lot of miles on the road in a short period of time, and I'll cherish those moments.

As a friend, you simply couldn't ask for a better friend. He was always there, every time. When my brother was injured and my parents had to leave to British Columbia, Pat was there, no questions asked. Any resources, any help our family needed, he was prepared to give.

As I go about my days here at Queen's Park, I often think about Pat. I say hello to him every time I pass his name on the marble wall. I wonder how he would have approached different issues and situations. I also wonder if he would be proud, and indeed I think he would be, not only of the job that I'm doing but of the job that our entire caucus is doing, and our party.

I also know that he would be proud of his family: Rose Claire, Michael, Christine, David, James and Steven. He loved you all so much. You were the centre of his universe. I know that as much as he gave you, you returned that love tenfold to him. I want to thank you, the Hayeses, for sharing him with us for so long. The



sacrifice and time spent away from your family is really a reality that I know now all too well. In sharing him with us, you ensured that this wonderful man's contribution to his community will never be forgotten. He touched so many lives in a special way.

Today, in this House, we say thank you, Pat. Thank you for the moments you gave us. We all love you, miss you and cherish each memory, each and every day.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Today I, too, stand to remember one of Windsor-Essex county's most cherished citizens: Patrick Hayes, loving husband, father and grandfather, who passed away in May 2011. Thanks to my colleague from Essex for his role in sharing with us all his memories of his mentor and friend. I know that that was not the easiest to do, to stand up and share with us his thoughts, so again, thank you for that.

I stand to remember and honour Pat on behalf of the entire Liberal caucus. Today, as has been mentioned, we are joined by Mr. Hayes's wife, Mrs. Rose Claire Hayes; sons Michael, David, James and Steven; sisters Dorothy, Gloria, Marilyn, Nancy; brothers Peter and Bill; as well as several family members and friends and colleagues, all of whom have been introduced earlier.

These chambers are familiar with Mr. Hayes's name, as he served honourably in this House from 1985 to 1987 and again from 1990 to 1995 as the member from Essex North and, subsequently, Essex-Kent.

Similarly to every member, Pat's path to Queen's Park was built through hard work, for dedication to the people he represented. "Equality" and "social justice" were not mere words but truly the motivation and action by which Mr. Hayes will be remembered.

I'm certain my colleague from Essex, as he has indicated in his statement, will attest to the fact that Windsor-Essex lost more than a friend; it lost inspiration as well. Today we are not divided in saying that we are in grief for the passing of this great human being, and we pay tribute to his many achievements.

At his first nomination, Pat stood and let it be known that he would be a strong voice for Essex, a strong voice for public health care, a strong voice for public education, and certainly to ensure that his municipalities were appropriately serviced and supported. Speaker, I am certain this chamber and our community will benefit from his advocacy for many years to come.

Pat went on to serve as warden and mayor of Lakeshore, where he was able to use his knowledge of the importance of all levels of government working together to best serve municipalities; where he continued to bring forward concerns and advocate for his constituents; and where he further developed community awareness of the meaning of social justice.

My city and my county mourn for Pat, and I know that all those in this assembly mourn with us. The sadness we share is enlivened by the faith in his or her fellow man and woman and in knowing there are people like Pat who put everything before themselves and learn to serve their neighbour.

Pat Hayes was a man we can remember as breathing life into these chambers. Thanks to his labour and love to

his ideals, he will always be remembered as a cornerstone of Essex county.

**1540**

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** As I was listening to my colleague pay tribute to his friend and mentor, I was looking up in the gallery. I will not look up in the gallery this time because I had tears while you were reading it and I know there were tears up there, too. So again, a heartfelt thank you to you, Taras, for the heartfelt tribute to your friend and your mentor as well.

It's my honour, Mr. Speaker, to take a moment today to stand and to recognize the life of one of our former colleagues, Mr. Pat Hayes, who served southwest Ontario and the communities of Essex twice as the MPP for Essex North, then Essex-Kent. Pat Hayes has been eulogized in the past quite eloquently, I know, by his good friend the member from Essex, and that's not my intention today.

I want to speak briefly about Pat as a fellow MPP from southwestern Ontario, as a man with whom there was always common ground that could be found, regardless of political stripe, and as a man who held tight to his convictions. Although I never had the privilege of getting to know Pat, I think I could say I knew his type. He was a union man, a member of the Canadian Auto Workers Local 200 and the proud chairman of the union's health and safety committee at Ford. From that, we can discern that Pat always had his co-workers' back if they needed him, the kind of guy that was looking out for those around him. And he certainly had a fighting spirit in him, too.

When Pat was elected on May 2, 1985, in Essex North, he didn't know at that point that he would only hold office for two years. But voters remembered that Pat would fight hard for them and they sent him back to office in September 1990, where he securely held his seat until 1995. That's the dream for so many of us: to have our chance at making our communities a little better, whether it be for four years, for eight, or even beyond. So many of us have the dream, and Pat fought hard for his second chance.

He once gave an interview to the London Free Press in which he was asked his biggest disappointment as an MPP. His answer: that the government financing simply wasn't there to support his call for public auto insurance. That spoke to his extraordinary sense of ambition and the degree to which his NDP roots made up his character. And if his biggest disappointment was not being able to effect change in the automotive industry that he enjoyed so much, so, too, did he show the same commitment to the place he came from.

He was born in Maidstone township and lived there for much of his life. His community engagement occupied a level many of us should aspire to emulate. He served his township as reeve, deputy reeve and councillor. He helped out with the Arthritis Society, community minor hockey, St. Mary's Roman Catholic church, the Essex County Library Board and much more.

Even at Queen's Park, all the way in Toronto, he found his way into portfolios that reflected where he had

come from: parliamentary assistant for agriculture and parliamentary assistant for municipal affairs. I'd say—and Taras, my colleague from Essex, may agree with me—these are two perfect files for a guy that probably knew southwest farmlands like the back of his hand.

Though we came from the same part of the province and fight for the same communities, Pat definitely had the drop on me in one area. There's no way I'd be able to win first place in the annual International Plowing Match the way he did in 1990. When his colleagues were busy standing in front of the Toronto microphones, Pat was getting behind the wheel of a tractor, pushing hard for first.

When you come from the rural southwest, there's no substitute for having your boots on the ground and making your first priority listening to the folks in the community that you serve. And so it's only fitting that, in the same London Free Press piece, Pat talked about his key accomplishment as an MPP and didn't point to a specific bill, an act or even a speech he that gave in the House. No, Pat spoke about the individual cases that he had resolved for his constituents. He talked about how his role was to reach outside his riding and help every Ontarian that he could.

He served as a member of provincial Parliament proudly. He was recognized by his peers. The fact that he was elected twice, even after defeat, is a commendation on his record. And he carried on with an enviable career in municipal politics, never letting go of the notion that he could better his community. As mayor of Lakeshore, he held onto that same conviction: boots on the ground, talking to constituents.

I congratulate my colleague Mr. Natyshak for having drawn upon Pat's expertise. I'm sure his words have had more resonance than mine, but I hope that I've done some credit to the similar office that both Pat and I hold, the honour and privilege of representing some of the hardest-working families, farmers and workers in this entire country: the people of southwestern Ontario.

On behalf of my colleagues in the Ontario PC caucus, I want to extend my warmest wishes to Pat's family and friends who have joined us here today, and especially to his wife, Rose, and his children. Every MPP has experienced the great joy of serving in this House, and that in itself has asked a lot of their families: that they be allowed to share their time and commitments with voters they may only meet once over a span of years spent sitting in their constituency office, knocking on doors, or in the day-to-day business of keeping Ontario running. The fact that you so willingly shared Pat with Ontario speaks to the strength of your family. We thank you for that.

Pat was gracious in defeat, humble in victory, and never forgot the people who asked him to help them in his duties at Queen's Park. Despite one's political leanings, that's something we can all hope to be said about us.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on the job Pat and I shared.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would like to thank all three members for sharing their kind words and all of the members for respecting the dignity of Pat Hayes. To the family, we will ensure that you receive a written copy of the comments made today, along with a DVD of our speeches. We thank you as family and friends for gathering to pay homage to a great man. Thank you.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is now time for petitions.

## PETITIONS

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the closure of the Bluewater Youth Centre will have a negative economic impact on Goderich and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas there is a need to deal with overcrowding in the Ontario correctional system; and

"Whereas the federal Bill C-10, the Safe Streets and Communities Act, will increase the population in the Ontario correctional system over the next four years; and

"Whereas the Bluewater Youth Centre would need very little retrofitting and the staff would need minimal retraining to open as a medium-secure correctional facility which could hold more than 200 beds required by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services; and

"Whereas specialized treatment programs within the correctional system such as drug treatment, mental health issues, could be offered with the skilled support staff currently in place; and

"Whereas we believe that this is the most economical way to add an additional 200 beds to the Ontario correctional system, as the building is in place and staff are currently hired to run such a facility;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government engage in meaningful community and employee consultation in order to find alternate uses within the youth services or correctional services system for this facility, thereby preventing job losses and economic hardship for an area already badly impacted by plant closures and tornado damage."

I totally agree with this petition. I affix my signature and I'll give it to page Liam, who's done a great job over the last three weeks. Here you go, Liam. Thank you.

1550

### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I have a petition here.

"Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted,



independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

"Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities."

I support this petition and affix my signature.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** This petition to the Legislature of Ontario is signed by John Shea and many others. John Shea is the trustee for the public schools in Ottawa-Orléans.

"Whereas the current enrolment of Avalon Public School is 687 students;

"Whereas the student capacity of the school is 495 students, as determined by the Ministry of Education's own occupancy formula;

"Whereas the issue of overcrowding and lack of space makes it impossible for Avalon Public School to offer full-day kindergarten until the overcrowding issue is addressed;

"Whereas Avalon Public School is located in a high-growth community;

"Whereas the enrolment at Avalon Public School is expected to continue rising at a rate of 10% to 15% a year for the foreseeable future;

"Whereas the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has been building a new school in Avalon a top capital priority;

"We, the undersigned, call on the province of Ontario and Ministry of Education to provide the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board with the necessary funding to build an additional school in Avalon, to open no later than September 2014."

I have signed this petition—I agree with the petition—and I send it forward with Ammaar.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here on the future of 80 long-term-care beds in the village of Tavistock, and it was presented to me by a great number of people who are from the area of Tavistock.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tavistock's Bonnie Brae Health Care Centre is an 80-bed, D-class nursing home that must be either rebuilt or closed by July 2014; and

"Whereas there is currently an application by a private operator to move the 80 licensed beds outside of Oxford county to the city of London, despite the recent opening of two other long-term-care homes in Middlesex county in 2010; and

"Whereas long-term-care wait times in Oxford county can be as much as 134 days longer than in Middlesex county; and

"Whereas Tavistock receives referrals from the nearby Waterloo Wellington CCAC, which has among the highest waits for long-term care in the province;

"We, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario retain these beds in Tavistock and seek partners to fast-track replacement of the Bonnie Brae as part of Ontario's 10-year plan to modernize 35,000 long-term-care beds."

I thank you very much for the opportunity to present this petition, and I will affix my signature, as I totally agree with it.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I have a petition here on behalf of the people of northeastern Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets at Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately."

I fully agree with this petition, will sign it and send it down with Nicholas.

### IMMIGRATION POLICY POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I do agree with this petition, Speaker, will affix my signature and send it to you by way of page Teresa.

#### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have a petition from my residents from the great riding of York South-Weston, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

"Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

"Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and send it your way by page Preston.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients under certain conditions...; and

"Whereas," since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with" Health

Sciences North, "its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through" Health Sciences North, "thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask page Victoria to bring it to the Clerk.

#### IMMIGRATION POLICY

##### POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I do agree with this petition, Speaker, and will affix my signature and send it to you via page Hassan.

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#### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and



"Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

"Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and send it with page Victoria.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I am pleased to present a petition today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the people of Ontario with respect to the decision to close Blyth Public School by the Avon Maitland District School Board.

"Whereas the pupil accommodation review states that an ARC committee is required, among other things, to determine the value of a school to the local economy, yet in the case of the Blyth Public School, there is in the minutes of the ARC committee not a single reference to any discussion of the effects of school closure on the local economy; and

"Whereas the same guideline states that the ARC, which is appointed by the board, must include membership drawn from the school community and the broader community, including, among others, business and municipal leaders, yet the ARC meetings considering the Blyth Public School included no Blyth business or municipal leaders; and

"Whereas the only invitations to public meetings in Blyth regarding the accommodation review were taken home by students to their parents, with the result that the broader community were not represented in the discussions; and

"Whereas many other communities across Ontario are now encountering very similar behaviours by their school boards; and

"Whereas single-school communities across Ontario are being permanently damaged economically and socially by the closure of their only school, which is, according to Premier McGuinty, the heart and soul of these communities; and

"Whereas the current Education Act of Ontario very undemocratically provides school boards with the absolute power to close any school they choose, with no avenue of appeal available to anyone, not even members of their own communities;

"Therefore, we, the residents of Ontario who have signed our names below, do hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to adopt and enact the following measures:

"(1) An immediate moratorium on all disputed school closures resulting from the accommodation review process and continuing until June 30, 2015; and

"(2) The immediate striking of a truly independent third party body with the authority to review and reverse all disputed school closures found to be detrimental to the community or in conflict with other provincial programs or regulations; and

"(3) Revision of the Education Act to require school boards to work with their municipalities and communities to ensure school closures comply with the principles and practices of sound community and educational planning."

I agree with this petition and I affix my signature.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we wish to call government order G30, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in some surprise that the government House leader would announce, in conflict of the printed orders of the day, that we would be debating G30, when in the orders of the day it says G19. I speak to standing order 56: "Before the adjournment of the House on each Thursday during the session, the government House leader shall announce the business for the following week."

Now, I understand that this may only be a convention, but it's also about respect for the House and respect for the members of this House. The legislation that we debate here is significant and important to the people of the province of Ontario. It's also important to the members of this Legislature. So they go to some effort preparing for debates, and when that is on the order paper—first of all, when it's agreed at House leaders, and then on the order paper, on orders of the day. I think that member is justified in asking, "Well, just a minute." They may say to their whip or they may say to our House leader, "What's going on here? We've prepared to debate G19, Residential Tenancies Act amendments." And now the government, at the last minute—and we're not talking about today, this morning, at question period or even at noon. No. The House recessed after question period until 3 o'clock, and we find out just prior to reconvening at 3 o'clock that the government has changed the orders of the day.

They're both in second reading. They've both been debated; one's at six hours and some; G30 is up over seven hours. What kind of compelling reason—other than to disrespect the members of the opposition who also have a job to do and prepare for it—would the government have to change, at the last moment, Speaker, the

orders of the day and which bill we will be debating this afternoon?

I think that there is no reason why G19 could not be debated today. They're both in, as I say, roughly the same time frame as to how much the bills have been debated. They're both bills that are, to some degree, housekeeping-type bills. They're not the budget. If they want to bring a bill, let's talk about the budget.

But at the last minute, Speaker—and I respect the members of this caucus. I'm sure the Liberal House leader respects the members of his, but I also respect the members of the third party caucus and the government caucus. People prepare to speak for a particular bill on a particular day because that's what we get. If this doesn't mean anything, why do we print it?

I would ask you, Speaker, to say that, at the very least—I know there's a limit as to what we can do here because the government does seem to control the cards. I mean, things happen that even the will of the Legislature is not respected under many circumstances, such as, for example, when the Legislature votes as a majority to call a select committee for Ornge, and this government, after the Minister of Health says repeatedly that she will abide by the will of this Legislature—they just thumb their nose at the ruling, at the will of the Legislature and do not pass that.

So I would say that the government has some 'splainin' to do, as they say, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'd ask the member to speak to the point of order and not get off track, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I apologize. Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm just trying to give an illustration of another example.

But today this came as a complete shock. We had a recess of three hours. There was ample opportunity for House leaders to have an opportunity to discuss this, to ensure that our members could be ready. There are significant other events going on in the precinct. So I think that it is disrespectful of this House and disrespectful of the members for, at the last minute, the government House leader to change the orders of the day, and I would ask you to rule against them, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Timmins—James Bay. House leader.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just want to weigh in on this on probably two or three points. I won't be too long.

First of all, standing order 56 of the House says, "Before the adjournment of the House on each Thursday during the session, the government House leader shall announce the business for the following week." Maybe that's an area where we've got to make some standing order changes, I would argue, because we end up in a situation, as we do now, where the government, because they're unhappy about what the opposition is doing, is deciding at the last minute to change the order. I get the game. I—

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Stop ringing the bells.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, no, I understand—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I would ask the member just to listen to what I have to say. I understand it, but I don't think it helps in a minority Parliament for those type of things to happen.

I understand the government's frustration in the sense that the opposition has decided to ring bells. But, God, that's our right. There are very few rules in this House that allow an opposition to hold the government accountable and to voice its displeasure. So the opposition, having those very limited abilities to be able to do that, uses those rules very sparingly. We sat for three weeks this December; the House went along quite well.

We sat—what?—three or four weeks since this session has started. Things have gone quite well. I would say we've had very productive discussions of House leaders. Mr. Wilson, who's not here, who's the Conservative House leader—I stand corrected; I can't say that. I withdraw. But I just want to attest that there have been very good discussions of House leaders, and I don't think this helps how this House is going to function and the relationship between the House leaders and the parties to have the government switch the order at the last minute.

1600

So the point I make is: I understand what the government has just done, and precedent is that they can do these things. But I would put the House on notice that this will be an item we will discuss in the changes to the standing orders, because I think it's quite frankly not helpful. Number two, the government has many tools to be able to pass its business. We on this side of the House accept the parliamentary convention that government, at the end of the day, must get its agenda through. But there are very limited options for the opposition to hold them accountable, and when we use them, that should be respected.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Government House Leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** There are really two issues at hand. One is the fact that we wish to call government order G30. That is a change from what we originally thought we would be calling this afternoon. That was communicated to both opposition parties earlier this afternoon. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I can refer you to a ruling by Speaker Peters on June 1, 2010—I could provide this to you; I'm sure the table is aware of it—when he did rule that the government has the right to, in a sense, announce the business of the day or change the business of the day under the rules of this Legislature.

The second issue, though, is the one that was raised by the whip from the Conservative Party as to why we were doing it. I think it's very simple, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday several hours were set aside to discuss this bill in the Legislature. We all welcome the opportunity for members to debate and discuss, both through speeches and through questions and comments, and instead we went through hour after hour after hour of bell ringing, a clear disrespect for this bill and for the important debate that's going on.

*Interjections.*



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, the opposition has the right to ring bells; I agree with my friend the House leader for the New Democratic Party. But just as the opposition has the right to ring bells, the government can, at the end of the day—literally—when it looks back on those several hours we set aside for important debate on an important issue, say that we made basically no progress so we're going to try to bring it forward again this afternoon. As I said, we had informed both opposition parties earlier today, and I refer you to rulings by Speakers that it is within the government's authority to bring forward the order when it's called and change from what was in the Orders and Notices paper.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Timmins-James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Speaker, I am not going to prolong this point of order, but I just want to say clearly that I'm not disputing that the government has the right to call the order. That's not my point. It's pretty clear, when you read standing orders 55 and 56, that you have that right.

My point is, number one, that the opposition has very limited ability to hold the government accountable, and when the government thwarts the ability of the opposition to to hold them accountable, I don't think that adds to what this democracy is all about; and number two, in the end I think it doesn't add to the ability of House leaders to work in a congenial manner and be able to move business through this House. Those are the two points I'm trying to make.

I don't argue for a second you don't have the right. I'm just saying it's a bit high-handed, and I think the government would be well advised to think this through and try to reverse itself.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order, the member for Nepean-Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** On the same point of order, Speaker: On page 31 of the standing orders, my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke read into the record:

"56. Before the adjournment of the House on each Thursday during the session, the government House leader shall announce the business for the following week."

Yesterday, of course, the government had the opportunity to change those orders. They chose not to, and today's order paper states very clearly:

"Orders of the Day ...

"G19. Resuming the debate adjourned on April 2, 2012..."

Further to that, Speaker, yesterday when the bells were ringing, which is what this member has alluded to, not what was previously called out of order and told—he stuck to the point. Yesterday when the bells were ringing, the parliamentary liaison working group, which has been created by the Premier to ensure that legislation moves quickly through this chamber—that was cancelled by the government House leader—had an opportunity for him to notify members of the opposition that the orders of the

day would change. If I misspoke, then I do apologize. But we did have an opportunity at the parliamentary liaison working group to discuss any possible changes.

Now, my colleague from Timmins-James Bay rightly points out that in this chamber right at this moment—or in this House, I should say—the Legislative Assembly committee has been struck and has been advised by the House that we are to undertake a review of the standing orders. I can say, given the fact that obviously they're going to try to override this by standing order 55, we must look at that and what the repercussions are.

I will say this: I wrote a note to a member of the third party today to remind him of why members will ring bells. It's because there are no other opportunities for the opposition to voice their displeasure in this place. After all, these rules that are in place here, the rules and procedures of this House—the standing orders—are there to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority, okay? Now, that's a statement that's very important, and of course this government would laugh at that. But the reality is, that is why in parliamentary procedure we have rules: to protect the rights of members who have opposing views.

Calling government order 30 as opposed to government order 19, without the knowledge of the opposition, does a couple of things, not least of which is that it demeans the state of debate. When members in this assembly appear in their seats to vote and to debate on an item, and that item is changed immediately, without their knowledge, it actually lessens the degree to which we are impacting in a positive way the debate of our society.

That is what has happened here, Mr. Speaker. That is why I think it is important for you to rule on this immediately, and why I believe that the members of the official opposition and the third party have had taken away their rights and their protections, as members, to debate the order and the bill on which they had anticipated to debate. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. That will be the end of points of order on this; we're wearing it out. I am going to take a five-minute recess to discuss it, and I'll come back with my ruling.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Speaker, as the person who raised—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** No, that's the end of it, thank you. I will take a five-minute recess and I'll rule on this.

*The House recessed from 1617 to 1623.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. This is an issue that has been raised on several occasions over the years. It is true that the standing order uses the word "shall," but it is also true, as previous Speakers have pointed out, that this procedure has been more or less disused for quite some time now.

When this has been raised before, other Speakers have noted that it is certainly useful to the members to know in advance what the business of the day will be, but they also have noted that the Speaker cannot compel that this be done.

The point was also made by previous Speakers, and by contributors to the very point of order, that it is obviously a good practice and of assistance to the House for reasonable notice to be given of the day's business. I agree with those previous rulings.

Notice being preferable, the government House leader nevertheless has the ability to call any eligible item of business on the order paper. Order G30 is therefore properly before this House at this time.

Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a new point of order—and this is standing order 23(b)—I've been a member of this House for eight and a half years or so. I've been present when a number of points of order have been raised, and I have yet to see the member who raised the point of order being denied the opportunity to speak to his or her point of order a second time.

Standing order 23 says, "In debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she:

"(a) Speaks twice to a question, except in explanation of a material part of his or her speech in which he or she may have been misunderstood, in which case the member may not introduce a new matter.

"(b)"—and remember I said "except"—"Directs his or her speech to matters other than,

"(i) the question under discussion; or

"(ii) a motion or amendment he or she intends to move; or

"(iii) a point of order."

Speaker, you allowed my colleague from Timmins–James Bay to speak to a point of order twice—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Nepean–Carleton knows that I also allowed another member of his caucus to speak on the issue, and there were no new points being brought up.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Renfrew. You realize there were no other points being brought up of new, additional information.

The ruling has been made, and the ruling stands.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I will not debate you personally anymore.

#### FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE ACT (EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT), 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 SUR LE CONGÉ FAMILIAL POUR LES AIDANTS NATURELS (MODIFICATION DES NORMES D'EMPLOI)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 3, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave / Projet de

loi 30, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé familial pour les aidants naturels.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate. The member for Welland.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** The caregiver leave act is a bill that would provide an unpaid, job-protected leave of absence to provide care or support to certain family members who have a serious medical condition. The bill, Mr. Speaker, is a very small positive step forward, but there will be relatively low take-up if the federal government does not change the EI provisions so that caregivers can get some form of compensation to actually go along with the leave to look after sick family members. The McGuinty government must push the federal government hard to make sure that those EI changes take place.

Most employees don't understand their rights under the Employment Standards Act on a number of issues. The government must ensure that Ontario workers know about the leave and that there are no employer reprisals for employees wishing to take the leave. One of the concerns that I have is, how will such requests be monitored and how will they be enforced?

If you had an opportunity to read a report from the Workers' Action Centre which was done for the 2010-11 period, it finds that there are all kinds of violations and non-enforcement of the Employment Standards Act that occur with respect to unpaid wages. The study actually surveyed 520 people in low-wage jobs, the same type of people that we're trying to protect with these leaves of absence. Twenty-two percent of workers surveyed reported that they are being paid less than the minimum wage of \$10.25 per hour in their current jobs. Minimum wage is the core legal standard below which wages should not fall, and yet 22% are not being paid what they should be, and it's not being enforced by the employment standards branch.

Unpaid wages: 33% of workers surveyed reported being owed wages from their employer. Of these, 77% said they never were able to collect their wages, even though we have an employment standards branch that is supposed to enforce the Employment Standards Act.

Overtime violations: 60% of respondents reported working more than 44 hours in a week during the past five years, but in fact when they've worked beyond that 44 hours, they're actually not getting overtime, which is provided under the Employment Standards Act; they have not been able to achieve getting that. Only 25% of those workers who complained to the employment standards branch successfully got their overtime through that complaint process.

Vacation pay: 34% of workers surveyed reported problems getting their 4% vacation pay that they're entitled to under the employment standards. Many of them reported that they never got their vacation pay. Thirty-six per cent of workers reported that they didn't get their termination pay or severance pay under the Employment Standards Act.

Clearly there aren't enough employment standards enforcement officers. There's probably a backlog of



complaints in that process. Thirty-seven per cent of workers reported they didn't get their paid public holidays, the statutory holidays that they're entitled to under the act. Many complained that they had pay stub violations; 31% of them that their pay was late; 17% reported getting paycheques that bounced—they didn't ever get any money. And—

*Interjections.*

1630

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member from Welland.

Folks, we have three sidebars going on very loud, and I'm having trouble hearing the member from Welland. Could we take it outside, please? Thank you.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you, Speaker.

Workers have also reported, because they are not able to get their wages, their paid holidays, their vacation pay—and likely they won't be able to get these unpaid leaves of absence to look after their sick family members, because if they can't get the important things that they need, like pay for the work that they actually do for their employers, how are they ever going to get these unpaid leaves of absence to look after family members? So because of that, they've reported having difficulty sleeping, they've reported depression, they've reported anxiety, because there is no enforcement by the employment standards branch for these people. Employees report that they have little protection from these employers' violations, and in some cases, when they complain, they actually are fired.

They found that we need substantial improvements in workers' protections. So that's part of the reason that I find there are problems with this particular bill. All employees who are covered under employment standards, whether full-time, full-time permanent, full-time temporary or short-term, should be eligible for this leave, and there would be no requirement for that employee to be employed for a particular length of time. But imagine someone working for three or four months and trying to go and get a two-week or a three-week or an eight-week unpaid leave to look after a sick parent or a sick child, a sick loved one, when you can't even get your paycheque. Your paycheque is bouncing; you are not getting your paid holidays; you are not getting your overtime pay. Why could we expect that there will be enforcement to make sure that people are actually going to get this unpaid leave of absence?

It goes on to say that a physician would determine whether the condition of the family member is serious, in the meaning of the act. In other words, the physician's recommendation triggers eligibility for the leave. Well, try and get in to see a doctor to actually even get this information to take to your employer to get the leave approved. And then at the end of the day, you may not get the leave in any event, after you've gone through this. And these are low-paid workers who in fact probably will then have to pay \$30 or \$50 to actually get a note from the doctor to take to their employer to apply for a leave that they likely won't be approved for.

There is no EI support for this leave. Other leaves under the Employment Standards Act include pregnancy leave, parental leave—which in many cases, but not all cases, have some top-up to the EI provisions, if you qualify for EI—family medical leave, organ donor leave, personal emergency leave, declared emergency leave, and reservist leave.

This new leave should not be confused with the family medical leave, which provides up to eight weeks' leave to provide care to a family member who has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death occurring within the next 26 weeks. Since 2004, there has been EI support for this leave. So, as well, there needs to be EI support for this new leave.

I raised this issue the last time I spoke in one of the two-minute hits during this debate, and I really do have a problem. I think many people in a low-wage-earning capacity, people working for minimum wage—or less, if you actually read this report from the Workers' Action Centre—will have difficulty taking a whole week off. When you're only making \$10 an hour, that's \$400 a week, less your income tax. I don't know that people could actually take a whole week off work, and so I think there actually need to be some amendments to this bill to allow people to take a day or two off and perhaps share that with their family members.

The bill's effectiveness, I think, is minor, but essentially it is a positive step to those taking time off from work to care for family members. But once again, I think that the enforcement piece is going to be a huge issue. Obviously, the bill would be more effective if it had some EI support and some more flexibility, but enforcement is always an issue. Probably the biggest obstacle to employees taking advantage is fear of employer reprisal.

Now, I know that the purpose of this is to make sure that people don't lose their jobs because they request this leave, but the reports that I've read is that people are losing their jobs because they're trying to make claim for wages that they've earned or they're trying to make claim for overtime that they've earned. So, clearly, if they can be fired for that, they can be fired for taking this leave to look after their family, with no recourse, because the enforcement is not happening at the ESA branch. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I want to thank the member from Welland for the points that she has brought forward. I think that that's what we're trying to do here: All parties are trying to bring forward thoughtful comments and changes to the bill. The intent is to give something, the one thing that a family or a person may need the most when a loved one is seriously injured or ill, and that is the intent of this bill.

It is a matter of compassion, as we have said many times. We think that we all believe in this House that it is the right thing to do. Although right now it is an unpaid leave, it would allow those that are facing very difficult family situations the time off and the comfort of knowing

that their jobs are secure. There are always going to be good employers and bad employers, and we need to be vigilant on that.

The government intends to ask the federal government to provide EI. At the time, we're seeking consensus first in this House. I think it also shows—we're debating it here at the provincial level—respect for this House first. The government does intend certainly to do that, and I want just to also highlight the fact that all employees who are covered under the ESA, whether they're full-time, part-time, permanent or term contract, would be part of this bill—of the proposed leave—and that there would be no requirement that an employee be employed for a particular length of time to be eligible for this proposed leave. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments. The member—I'm having a freeze here.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** Renfrew—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke; sorry.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** How quickly you forget me, Speaker.

Look, I had Bill 19 out here. I was all ready to speak to it. I had to even get a copy of Bill 30, because of course, the government changes the rules just whenever they see fit.

Let's get to the point of Bill 30 here, folks. This is called "pass the buck and try to take credit." That's what it should be called. You see, they're putting all of the onus on employers to grant leave to workers who have to take time off to look after an ill relative. There's not a nickel to back it up, so the onus is on the employers. And then, they want the federal government to pay through the EI.

So this is what they do: They didn't sit down and talk to the federal government and say, "Look, we've got a plan." You know what? This is a good idea. I think that in this day and age, as more and more people are looking after elderly parents and elderly relatives because this government doesn't, we're in a situation where that happens to be the order of the day—no pun intended—and it doesn't actually change. But now they come ahead with this. They didn't talk to the federal government. You know what's going to happen now? This government will go on its little tour during one of our constituency breaks and go on and on about how the federal government is failing because they're not putting the money up for this. But they never sat down with the federal government and said, "Can we talk about this?" No; that's just the way they work.

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Instead of debating the budget or debating other matters of legislation, they bring this forward at a time when Ontarians are wondering, where are the jobs for the 600,000 people?—not necessarily whether I'm going to have time off to look after my grandmother.

It's just typical of the way this government does business. It's a shell game, it's smoke and mirrors, and it's not right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Parkdale—High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly commend the member from Welland. She pointed to the widespread abuse of workers' rights across the province of Ontario; the absence, almost complete in many instances, on files of the Ministry of Labour.

For example, today we had a press conference for 18 workers who have been laid off—over 30 years, some of them—who had worked for the Four Seasons Hotel, bought for \$3.7 billion by the likes of Bill Gates, who was one of the investors. And yet these people were let go with severance paid only on their minimum wage. All these people lived on their gratuities. They paid taxes on their gratuities, and yet their severance was on minimum wage—a total travesty; the Minister of Labour completely absent on that file.

Only one in 100 employers ever gets a visit from somebody checking up on the way they treat their workers. In fact, my children, who have worked in the hospitality industry, tell me that right now in the hospitality industry it's completely standard to work for nothing; to be invited in and to be told, "We need to train you for three days. You've got to come. You hang out with the cook, or you hang out on the floor. We won't pay you anything. Consider it part of your training." This is where employment standards are at in the province of Ontario.

We get calls all the time in my constituency office from new immigrants who don't know their rights, because they're not being paid minimum wage at all. People aren't going to complain, Mr. Speaker. They don't have the time or the energy or the cultural capital to complain. They're just going to go look for another job because that's what they have to do. It's this government's responsibility to look after their rights for them, and this government is completely absent.

Then we get this silly bill, G30, so people can take time off without pay—whoop-de-do. Tell me, who in the province of Ontario can take time off without pay in this economic environment? You show me the person, and I'll show you a person who doesn't really need to work in the first place. This is the problem. This is not the solution.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** I want to talk about employers in Ontario, briefly. I think many members opposite have commented on this before, have agreed with what I'm going to talk about, and that is, many progressive employers do exercise compassion and care when it comes to their employees. Many do give paid time off when emergency issues happen or their family caregiver requirements come forward. I know this from my work as an HR executive in the private sector, I know this from my work in the broader public sector, and I know this from my role in advising organizations on how to be good, progressive employers.

Believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, we actually have a skills shortage in many, many areas in Ontario, and many



employers want to be good and progressive employers. Retaining employees is something that helps manage costs, it helps productivity, and it just has so many benefits. So I think we need to acknowledge there are many great employers out there that do the right thing when it comes to employees needing flexibility.

However, there are certain types of jobs in our workforce in Ontario, whether it's call centres or other types of work, where it's not so easy to accommodate time off and maybe not as easy to accommodate paid time off, especially when it comes to small employers. Speaker, in Ontario, most of our employers are indeed small employers, employing 20 or less employees. So a legislative framework such as Bill 13 provides a way in which we can ensure that people have the time off to be with their family.

Our government wants to give employees the one thing they need most when it comes to caring for seriously ill or injured family members: time to be with their loved ones. That's why I support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Welland has a two-minute response.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I just want to share with you some of the comments of the workers who were surveyed in this interview because of the lack of ESA enforcement. Workers who can least afford it are being forced to bear significant loss of income, and this is what they've said. These are people who are working, who didn't get their overtime pay, maybe didn't even get their regular pay, didn't get their paid holidays, perhaps didn't get their severance pay or their termination pay—\$20, so a pretty good sampling of people were surveyed.

"I went to the food bank and to social services."

"I had to ask my friends for food."

"Lost trust; discouraged about [finding] honest work; followed by depression."

"I need to earn the same money as Canadian workers, since I did the same job." Apparently, they weren't being paid the minimum wage.

"Worked and lived on a farm. We had to buy everything but it was hard to get to the store; some days I cannot get any food."

"He"—the employer—"told me I don't have" any "rights since I am illegal and he can call the police."

"I have seen my co-workers fired because they fight for their rights. Employment standards don't or can't do anything once a worker is fired."

"I always have to live in fear of getting fired if I complain or don't do what the employers tell me to do."

Speaker, these are the kinds of comments that were made by the workers who are living on minimum wage or less. And I don't disagree: There are some good employers, but there are plenty of bad employers out there. So to add a new feel-good bill to the workload is not going to achieve anything for these workers, who really need to have these important things fixed for them, such as wages, holidays, overtime and severance.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order, the member from Renfrew.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It just amazes me, Speaker, that today, the government House leader stood in this House and said, "The reason we changed the orders of the day was because our people wanted to speak to this bill." Yet when it's their opportunity in rotation to speak, they sit in their seats and don't even want to debate the bill? Shame on them, Speaker. Shame on them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I thank the member from Renfrew. I don't consider that a point of order. That's a statement.

Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I rise today to join the debate on Bill G30, and I'll be sharing my time today with the esteemed member of provincial Parliament from Northumberland—Quinte West.

The title of G30 is recorded as An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave. Mr. Speaker, the use of the word "respect" in this title actually gives me cause to reflect on the amount of respect this government has for the taxpayers of Ontario—

**Interjection:** No respect.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** —or, in reality, I should say, the lack thereof. We have seen scandal after scandal, with no respect given to the people who pay the bills in this province. It wasn't that long ago that we learned about the \$1-billion spending scandal at eHealth; we had the scandal at OLG; and this Liberal government has continued to raise taxes in order to pay for their reckless spending scandals. Now, unfortunately, we have Ornge, which, in my opinion, is battling eHealth for the title of the biggest Liberal scandal. I'm disappointed—

**Interjection:**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member from Peterborough, point of order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much. I have the utmost respect for the member from Huron—Bruce, but it seems to me that the bill we're discussing is An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave. Mr. Speaker, I think it's 26(b), the relevant section in the standing orders, in terms of having the debate relevant to the topic. That's all.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Hearing the point of order, I would suggest that the member from Huron—Bruce was wandering a little bit when she got on the Ornge topic, so I would suggest that she stick to the script.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The whole essence of my delivery today is about respect. And, Mr. Speaker, since the Liberals are showing a total lack of respect and seem to be ignoring the will of the House and the will of the people, who want more openness and more accountability into Ornge, I move the adjournment of this debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Huron–Bruce moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard varying responses there.

All in favour will say “aye.”

All those opposed will say “nay.”

I believe the ayes have it, in my opinion.

Call in the members. It will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1650 to 1720.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Ms. Thompson has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 25; the nays are 35.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The motion is defeated.

Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Again I rise to speak about Bill 30. Again, this is An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave.

You know what? We all know what this bill is and what it does. Do we all support caregivers and those who unselfishly give of their time to help their family who are ill? Of course we do. But as my esteemed colleague the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke pointed out earlier today, this bill is really about passing the buck and trying to take the credit.

However, when this bill was announced as part of the 2011 Liberal platform, many people acknowledged that this bill, in particular, does nothing but put the onus on business owners to pay for this extended caregiver leave. Small and medium businesses, who are already struggling to pay the bills, especially their ever-rising energy bills, are the ones who are in the end paying for this piece of legislation.

Do you know what? This government is doing nothing to stimulate the economy and allow these small businesses and medium businesses to realize their goal of job creation. We have to take a look at their expensive energy projects, and we have to really take a look at this particular bill, G30. Again, it talks about respect, and we see nothing of it.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I remind the members that their member is speaking, and there are four sidebars going on while their member is speaking. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Okay, Mr. Speaker. But again, you know what? This bill shows once again that this government is not on the side of small business, like

the PC party is. They're on the side of doing what appears to look good instead of what makes sense. What does this really do to help the people who are self-employed and need to take time off to care for an ill family member? Absolutely nothing. Just like our government is doing in terms of stimulating the economy and driving jobs: nothing.

Because this government has not committed any dollars to assisting this program, the person who is self-employed is left on the sidelines. I have to question that this is nothing more than another feel-good act introduced by the McGuinty government to gain favour with Ontarians. This bill is nothing more than political posturing, and I am disappointed that this government would take an issue as sensitive as one where people are willingly giving up their time and their own money to help care for an ill loved one.

So you know what? The only respect in this particular bill is actually found in the title, and the fact of the matter is, in terms of respect, given this morning's delay tactics and efforts to obstruct the will of the House to review Ornge, in terms of the scandal that is clearly there, via a select committee—if ever, this is exactly why the will of the House should be respected and a select committee be struck, like the minister agreed to do. Since the Liberals seem to be ignoring the will of the House and the will of the people who want more openness and more accountability, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Ms. Thompson has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a dissenting no.

All in favour, say “aye.”

All opposed, say “nay.”

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. We'll have another 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1726 to 1756.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Members take their seats, please.

Ms. Thompson has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour, please rise to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed will please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 59; the nays are 1.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The motion carries.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** This House is adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1757.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London-Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington-Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough-Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham-Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East-Cooksville / Mississauga-Est-Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga-Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale-High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor-Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerritsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland—Quinte West	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham—Kent—Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward—Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak  
Grant Crack, Kim Craiton  
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris  
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak  
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue  
Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Bob Delaney, Victor Fedeli  
Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton  
Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza  
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Joe Dickson, Rosario Marchese  
David Orazietti, Laurie Scott  
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David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Donna H. Cansfield, Helena Jaczek  
Bill Mauro, Jim McDonell  
Phil McNeely, Randy Pettapiece  
Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor  
Lisa M. Thompson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Shafiq Qaadi  
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle  
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren  
Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan  
Shafiq Qaadi  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield  
Steve Clark, Garfield Dunlop  
Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod  
Jonah Schein  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett  
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof  
Michael Coteau, Grant Crack  
Vic Dhillon, Randy Hillier  
Rod Jackson, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh  
Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch



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## **Community safety**

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Hon. John Milloy.....	1503

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## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

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### **Fred West**

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### **Climate change**

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### **Paramount Fine Foods**

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### **Dig Safe Month**

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	1506
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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 5 April 2012

Jeudi 5 avril 2012



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 5 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 5 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES  
AMENDMENT ACT (RENT  
INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION  
À USAGE D'HABITATION  
(TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION  
DES LOYERS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April on April 2, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / *Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** First off, I was pleased to see the Speaker enter the chamber this morning sans cane, and I trust that you're feeling better and are recovering and healing, so it's great to see that you're feeling great.

Speaker, I'm pleased to stand today on behalf of the New Democratic caucus to speak on Bill 19 to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, which the government claims the aim is to make rent more affordable and more predictable. The government proposes a rent increase cap for private landlords in the very profitable rental housing industry at 2.5%.

Speaker, I forgot to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Kelowna—Kenora—Rainy River. Kelowna is a wonderful place as well, Mr. Speaker, it really is. But Kenora—Rainy River—they don't have a Rainy River in Kelowna.

The government proposes a rent increase cap for private landlords in the very profitable rental housing industry at 2.5%. When I say "very profitable," the private rental housing industry is one of the only industries that has consistently proven to make money due to rising property values.

Bill 19 will do almost nothing to address Ontario's crisis in affordable housing or provide for Ontario tenants' right to livable, well-repaired and safe units. Further, Bill 19 will not deal with the over 50,000 to 60,000 units that were exempted from rent control provisions. This failed experiment to exempt certain units from rent control was supposed to foster a climate to produce more affordable units, and that just never happened, Mr. Speaker. And Bill 19 is not retroactive. It does nothing to protect those tenants who have already undergone this year's rental increase in accordance with the guidelines.

Speaker, Ontario's most vulnerable are tenants, and in no particular order they are also seniors; they are children; they are single parents raising families; they are the working poor; they are those on social assistance, like Ontario Works; they are the disabled; they are immigrants, refugees and people of colour. I also wonder, Speaker, if the government has turned their mind to what affordable means to the most vulnerable.

Speaker, as I stand before you with the same concerns as my colleagues in the NDP, I truly believe that the government here has missed the mark on their efforts to make housing more affordable and more accessible. For instance, 1.3 million Ontarians pay more than 30% of their income on housing; 120,000 Ontario families live in overcrowded conditions; 80,000 Ontarians live in sub-standard or unsafe housing that requires major repair; and at that time, 142,000 were on the affordable housing wait-list, and that has grown to 152,000 households on the wait-list, and growing. On average, the wait is 10 years to get into affordable housing. People die waiting to get into these affordable housing units.

The insecurity today, compounding the lack of affordable housing, because of the risk utility costs, such as hydro and gas bills—energy costs will increase another 50%. One of the reasons I am so proud to stand on this side of the House, as the only party that has taken the effort from the outset of this Parliament to introduce a measure that would offer tenants and offer Ontarians a break, finally—that's something that we haven't heard, certainly for eight years, at this level—a break in their home heating costs, where we know those costs are ever-escalating and they add to the burden that is managing a household budget.

We also see on this side of the House that home heating, particularly in Canada, is something that we shouldn't necessarily allow corporations to gouge our residents on. It's something that is a necessity, certainly in the northern regions of our province, where folks heat



with oil, likewise in all the other regions of the province. In some areas, folks have to determine whether they pay for their heating or pay for food. That is a reality. It may sound clichéd, but it is a reality in today's economy where so many are out of work and so many struggle to just get by.

The income level of Ontarians is stagnating and declining. During the election campaign, the Liberals promised to keep the rent increase guidelines in line with what was happening in the real world for tenants. In the real world, tenants are losing their jobs, facing demands for wage freezes and rollbacks or living with a zero increase on social assistance. We know that has been the prescription by this government in terms of tackling the deficit. They tend to want to place that burden more and more on those who can afford it less and less. In the real world, the average rent is over \$1,100 for a two-bedroom apartment, and there is no limit on what a landlord can charge a new incoming tenant.

Even those who are well employed or seniors, who have to work hard all their lives, are feeling the pinch with the cost of living. The middle class is shrinking, of course. Half of all tenants spend more than 50% of their income on rent, and there are tenants who are making the choice between groceries, medication costs, sending their children on class trips or signing their children up for music or sporting activities rather than their rent.

Good housing is basic to individual and population health, as bad housing policy leads to a heavy burden of poor health, premature death and increased costs. Dr. Gary Bloch, a family physician and University of Toronto professor who founded Health Providers Against Poverty, said in a March 28 news article—he makes the link between poverty to the much-needed social supports for those on low income and the enormous damage to his patients' health. He is quoted as saying, "And I worry this will result in our society being less healthy, which should be the number one goal of the government." And shouldn't it be the number one goal of society, not only of governance, but our neighbours?

0910

Mr. Speaker, I've always approached my politics quite simply as wondering that—you know, I take into consideration my neighbours, my neighbours to the left of me, my neighbours to the right of me, not in the political sense but in the literal sense. I figure if the neighbour to the left of me is struggling, which they are, finding it hard to find a job or having to have three jobs, finding it hard to make ends meet, and the neighbour to the right of me is struggling as well, then what I figure is that I'm either taking too much or not giving enough.

Certainly, in light of the government's actions in the recent budget, we see that there is really no balance. They certainly are taking too much from those who can least afford it and definitely not giving enough to those who need it. That's why, once again, I am so proud to stand on this side to offer some real, constructive proposals to the government side, and I hear and I sense that there's a little bit of—they've had some auditory engagement here.

Their ears are a little bit more open than I think they ever have been. I see the member listening. He is listening intently, and I thank him for that, because not only are these provisions and proposals that I think will do them well as a government, bringing back some measure of respect—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My mother always told me to listen.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** That is a good thing, and it's never too late to start, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that the member will start listening today, as we are on the verge of what could bring us into another election. But yet again, I think that the ideas, particularly around increasing the inventory of affordable housing in this province, an issue that's come before us at a time where it's critical, where our economy has really clobbered the most vulnerable in this province, those working poor or those who had lost their jobs after years of secure employment—we have to acknowledge that. It's an investment. It is a provision within this province that I think will trickle up.

There's something that you never really hear about: What about the trickle-up effect? What about when we take care of the poor? What about when we take care of those who need assistance, that it actually helps society get better on the way up? It's something that I think is never factored in in this House, that we can actually help those at the bottom, and by doing so, it helps everyone else. That's why I use the reference to my neighbours. I know that if I'm able to dedicate my life and my resources and ensure that my actions are contributing to some fairness in the society, my neighbour to the left of me and my neighbour to the right of me are going to be doing all right. It may sound altruistic but it's certainly something that I think we can use more of in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken just briefly on this bill. I will pass my time to the member from Kenora-Rainy River. I appreciate the time given to speak on the bill. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Kenora-Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you, Speaker.

I rise today to speak on Bill 19, an amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act, especially with regard to capping annual rent increases from 1% to 2.5%. In preparing for my discussion today, I spent a lot of time going over the remarks of my colleague the MPP for Welland on this subject. I believe she raised a number of important points about this bill and the affordable housing crisis that is facing our province. But rather than repeat the member for Welland's remarks, I will try to build on them and I'll try to bring a northern perspective to the table, because the challenges that we face in the north with regard to affordable housing are at times very similar but at other times very different than those being faced by members in southern Ontario. I dare say that, in my region, a rent increase cap might be a little less effective than proposing a cap on utility bill increases, which is something that I'll touch on a little later in my speech.

But before I go too far, I do want to draw a distinction, which I think that my party does quite eloquently,

between the rhetoric that's been used in this debate—so much of the rhetoric in this debate has been focusing on the term “landlord.” I want to be quite clear that there are some exceptionally good landlords out there. Generally, these landlords aren't looking to make a huge profit or living off of their properties, but instead are in situations where maybe their piece of property is more than one building, which is actually quite common in my region, or they've either moved out of town and they were unable to sell their property, or various other circumstances that have led them to focus more so on paying their expenses rather than profiting on the backs of others.

I do think that my party does a pretty good job of making this distinction in its proposal to require those who rent out six or more units to be a licensed landlord in the province. I think it draws a fairly clear distinction between those who may, for one reason or another, own a couple of properties and those who are actually in the business to make a profit.

I'd also like to say that there are many good landlords out there who do profit from their investments but do so in a way that's respectful of their tenants and their tenants' needs. In fact, there are many instances where landlords have had their property destroyed by bad tenants and have been forced to incur costs that are well above anything that they could ever possibly recover from the tenant to repair or replace the unit. So I just wanted to make that distinction.

There are good landlords and there are bad landlords, just as there are good tenants and bad tenants. Ideally, the Residential Tenancies Act would protect both sides in a fair and respectful manner. But with that in mind, I'd like to look at some of the concerns I have with this bill and the Residential Tenancies Act in general.

One of my greatest concerns is lack of consistency, both for tenants in general and those seeking affordable housing. When an individual is looking for a house or an apartment to rent, they have to look at two completely different models: those that are all-inclusive versus those where utilities and rent are actually separate.

I think it's fair to say for many people who may be starting out—and it may be true for all people—that determining this difference in value can be quite difficult. It's difficult, for those who are looking for a place to rent where utilities are not included, to really determine, based on the former tenant's bill, whether their costs will be in line with that or not. Some people look at the former tenant's bill and say, “Well, I'm frugal. I don't use this or that. I don't use a lot of electricity. I'm sure I can keep my costs down. I may be more accustomed to living in a cooler climate.” But then they can be hit with an exceptionally high bill shortly thereafter. The same could be said for landlords who rent their premises as an all-inclusive sort of deal.

I know of a situation, and actually it's a little comical. It was with my husband before we met. He was renting a unit. What happened was that one day his landlord approached him, and she was concerned about the high consumption of electricity that he was using in the apart-

ment. This was after she had already gone to Hydro One and asked what could possibly cause this spike of hydro. She was concerned that he had a grow op going on, because the spike had been so high.

#### *Interjection.*

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Turns out it was a coffee maker. You would not think that a coffee maker would cause that kind of a spike, but my husband drinks a lot of coffee, so he had it plugged in most of the time. So what she ended up doing in that situation, to kind of minimize the costs that she was spending, was she bought a very expensive, energy-efficient coffee maker to bring those costs down. Of course, with the cost of hydro soaring so much in recent years, I'm sure more and more landlords are moving away from this all-inclusive model, because it simply poses too much risk and it's just too expensive. Especially where I live, it's very much the case.

In my region, I'm not so convinced that this proposed amendment is going to make that big a difference. With the downturn in the forest industry, many communities in my region have a substantial number of vacancies, and there are a number of opportunities for individuals to rent places for near cost, simply because the real estate market has tanked. There are many people who need to leave the community to find a job elsewhere, but they're unable to sell their house, so they're forced to rent it. It's very hard to sell a house, as I said, when the industry has taken a hit. People aren't buying houses, and we're seeing houses that go for over \$100,000, \$150,000, selling for as little as \$20,000 to \$25,000.

#### **0920**

So it's difficult for people who are renting multiple complexes or complexes with multiple units to make a profit and to sell those. This situation is really quite different from what's happening in Toronto right now, where you have very profitable hotels that are being shut down in order that condos can be built.

Utilities, on the other hand, are a real killer in our region. The price of electricity has gone through the roof, and so has the price of fuel, such as home heating oil and also electricity. That too is another thing that people don't necessarily think about when they are looking to rent a place. I know I have an experience where I rented a very small place in rural northwestern Ontario, outside of any kind of formal municipality. It was a small 800-square-foot place, and my monthly bills were in the range of \$500 to \$700 just to heat the building, and that was not including any electricity or anything like that.

I would like to touch a little bit on affordable housing, as my colleague from Welland very aptly and skilfully discussed the other day. The truth is that many of the affordable housing units that we have built in this province, at least where I live, were built 30 to 40 years ago. They were built quickly and they were built cheaply. So, in many cases, they're insulated poorly. They're poorly ventilated, and some of these units have the electricity and the heat included, others do not.

So here we have a situation—I know when I was a constituency assistant, before I ran in the Legislature, I



had a couple people from Red Lake call down, and they were very concerned, because they didn't have a lot of money. Their subsidized rent was about \$85 a month, but their hydro bills, when they came in, were in the neighbourhood of \$700 to \$800. How does that make sense? When I talked to the area district services board, who provide the subsidized housing units, they said that unfortunately they aren't able to provide it for everybody, and for those folks in those units that they do provide everything included, sometimes they're subsidizing in the neighbourhood of \$3,000 a month just for electricity.

The point that I'm trying to make is that this bill does go a ways towards capping some of the profits that landlords can make, but it does very little for those who can afford to rent the least, whose utilities are already spiralling out of control. I'd like to see this bill do more to address that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It was interesting. I listened very, very intently to the member from Essex and to the member from Kenora-Rainy River. They made a significant contribution to the debate on Bill 19 this morning.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, if we roll back the clock to 1975, it was then that Stephen Lewis, who had become the Leader of the Opposition after the 1975 provincial election, pressed the Davis government to bring in rent controls in the province of Ontario. That was the product of co-operation in a minority government, the kind of co-operation that we're fostering each and every day that we're in this chamber.

But you know what's really important to the people who rent in the province of Ontario? Stats Canada released some information this morning that is terrific for Ontario. Ontario posted employment gains of 46,000, all full-time jobs, in March. It reduced the unemployment in the province of Ontario from 7.4% to 7.2%, the lowest in three years. Since March 2011, Ontario has increased employment by 1.3%—over 89,000 new jobs in the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. That is good news.

I certainly want to make sure that the members of the opposition—of course, they have some problems with Stats Canada. Their federal brother in Ottawa, when they were posting Stats Canada reports, threw that guy right under the bus because they didn't like the work that they were producing on a month-to-month basis.

It's really interesting. We bring in a budget the last week of March; 46,000 new jobs during the month of March. Mr. Speaker, we're providing the platform for growth in the province of Ontario, something that's so important for people who rent in the province of Ontario, because when the economy is solid, people are making new investments in rental housing across the province of Ontario, and certainly providing the opportunity for more people to rent as more people have jobs in this great province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It was like listening to stereo this morning, with the member from Essex and the member

from Kenora-Rainy River. To some extent, I admire and respect the fact that they stand here for "people of modest means," as they describe it themselves. And I do think it's shameful that your husband keeps leaving the coffee maker on; I would say that. That's shameful. It's costing you a fortune.

First, I want to start by saying that this is very important: This is Easter weekend, and I wish everyone a happy Easter. I hope the bunny is good to them. But I'm not surprised that Dalton McGuinty is not good to us. In fact, this is what this bill is about. What it does—there's nothing in this bill. I don't know why we're spending this much time on it. All it actually does—I'm going to read it to you. There's one section; actually, it's half a page. You could download this bill and it would cost you two cents, and it doesn't do very much. Here's what it does. One clause, this is all it does; I'm going to read it to you: "The guideline for a calendar year" should not be less than 1% and not more than 2.5%. That's all it does. It's a rent guideline.

So we support it. I have no idea why we're spending this much time, when the economy of Ontario is going over the cliff. What's more important, the underlying cause here, as we approach Easter, is that there's 600,000 families that can't afford to live here any more, in Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities is an elitist; I get that. He's a Toronto-based condominium type person, and probably quite wealthy, and it's not affecting him. It's my constituents that I'm standing up for, who can no longer afford to pay the electricity bill in their apartment. This is the truth of what I speak to, and it's a shame that this morning we're wasting this much time on such trivia.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** This morning I just wanted to introduce a particular seniors' group out of Elliot Lake who are very active in the community and speaking on behalf of seniors. They're called the Seniors' Action Group of Elliot Lake. They, along with many other seniors' groups in Algoma-Manitoulin, have really grave concerns when it comes to affordable rent, making the proper choices at the end of the month, looking at, "Am I paying my full prescription? Am I paying half my prescription? Am I going to be able to meet the rent at the end of the month? How much of an interaction am I going to have with my landlord?"

I just want to go back to the comment that my colleague from Kenora-Rainy River made in regard to the coffee machine. How many of you actually think that that coffee machine is on to heat the home? Well, I'll give you another perspective, which is actually a factual one. That coffee cup that they warm up every morning actually warms up their hands, because they're making the choice of closing their power or their hydro or their heating sources inside of their apartment, and this is them taking that opportunity to warm up their elderly hands. That's factual. That's happening right now.

So some of these changes, yes, they're light-hearted, but you know, in hindsight it actually is happening. So we need to make those changes. We need to make what is required in order to help a lot of our community members. I commend this group. They're referred to as SAGE; again, they're the Seniors' Action Group of Elliot Lake. They are a fantastic organization that are really big advocates for issues and concerns that are affecting not only seniors in Elliot Lake but the community of Elliot Lake. I take my hat off to them and I look forward to working with them and listening to a lot more of their input that they can provide to me so I can do my job effectively here.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure to rise just for a brief time in support of Bill 19 and to comment on the remarks made by the member for Essex and the member for Kenora–Rainy River. Why I'm so proud to be a member of this government is because I think this Bill 19 shows clearly that we have a very balanced and prudent approach to matters. What we're doing here is a matter of protection for both the tenant and the landlord. There are two parties obviously involved, and I just say to the member for Durham, who finds this bill trivial, I don't think that 29% of all households in Ontario which in fact are tenant households—that's well over a million households—would find this particular bill trivial.

0930

It's clearly something that is going to continue: our very responsible way of allowing affordable housing and stable housing for renters during these somewhat turbulent economic times. I think it shows that balanced approach that we've adopted over the last five years.

I think it's interesting to note that average rent increases over the last five years have only been 1.7%. Actually, since I have a number of figures here, I did do the average during the NDP time in government. The average rent increase between 1991 and 1995, I've calculated at some 4.5%. So, in a similar economic downturn, I think it's quite clear our government has in fact made rental housing even more affordable.

This rent guideline, capping rents at 2.5%, not falling below 1%, is a good balance for both the landlord and tenants. I urge all members to support this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Essex, you have two minutes to respond—the member for Kenora–Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'd like to address some of the comments that were made here. I would like to thank the members from Peterborough, Durham, Algoma–Manitowlin and Oak Ridges–Markham for their comments, and I'd just like to comment on a few of them.

I know the member from Peterborough talks about how we just—we're exploding with jobs in Ontario. I'm not sure where their Ontario ends, but I can tell you that it definitely doesn't include the northwest, because we are not rolling in jobs.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Or the southwest.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Or the southwest, right. Maybe just the GTA, maybe it doesn't go much beyond there.

With regard to the comment from the member from Durham, I think part of it is, when people think about their energy consumption, they think of things like, "Am I leaving the oven on a lot? Do I have the heat turned unnecessarily high?" They don't think about something like a coffee maker. I think most people are kind of blown away to realize how much electricity a coffee maker actually uses. But I can tell you, since that conversation with this landlord, he actually returned the coffee maker to her and he bought a carafe, which we use all the time, and he gets a lecture quite often about keeping the coffee maker on too much. But I do agree with the member from Durham when he talks about how this bill does very little. I mean, it caps increases, but it doesn't do much for the people who are already struggling to make ends meet. It doesn't mean a lot in the grand scheme of things.

I know that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities didn't speak formally, but I heard his interjections that if we think that the economy is bad here, we should perhaps move to Michigan and see how bad things can really be. I'm just wondering, is that really the position of this government, that we should model our economy after what's happening in Michigan? Maybe we try to raise the bar a little bit more, and I respectfully suggest that maybe we raise that bar.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise. Government House leader.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, we would like the debate to continue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak. I'd like to thank everybody else who has spoken. Although, I'm a little baffled as to what coffee makers have to do with Bill 19, which is primarily about regulating the guidelines on how we set rent increases. Anyway, I guess I will just add that I would like to speak to the member after to find out why she's talking about coffee makers and not about this particular bill.

I'm delighted to speak to Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2012. This is a bill that is very important to my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville. Anyone who has recently visited Mississauga will know that it's no longer a sleepy suburb of Toronto. Instead, it's a very happening town, with its own downtown core full of high-rises, including the stunning Marilyn Monroe building, which has given Mississauga a very easy-to-identify skyline. I know that my fellow members from Mississauga—from Mississauga South and Mississauga—



Erindale—will agree that I think Mississauga today has a much more distinctive skyline than the city of Toronto.

**Interjection:** I agree with you completely.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you.

I'm delighted that all of this is in my riding. I'm indeed privileged to have the downtown core as part of my riding. That includes Square One—which, by the way, gets more visitors than even Niagara Falls per year. I'm very proud of that.

**Interjection:** Let's put a casino there.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'd be happy to host one—city hall, the Living Arts Centre, the Art Gallery of Mississauga, Hammerson Hall, and the list goes on.

All of this is to say that my riding has a large number of high-rises. It's an urban, downtown core with a lot of rental buildings. So anything to do with rent guidelines is of huge importance to me and the folks in my riding.

This proposed legislation is an excellent piece of legislation that balances the concerns of tenants with those of landlords, because this balance is key to any sustainable system that ensures that rents remain affordable.

Before I launch into the specifics of the bill, I would like to take a few minutes to paint an overall picture of rental housing in this province. I'll start off by saying that this issue is important to me and my riding, but I also know that there is probably no corner of Ontario that does not have renters. From the smallest towns and villages of Ontario to Toronto, there are renters everywhere. Young families saving up to buy their first home, new immigrants moving into their first home, students studying far away from home, young people on their first jobs, people struggling to make ends meet who cannot afford a place of their own, newly divorced or separated people struggling with their new circumstances: Renters come in all ages and all demographics.

I have myself been a renter, as a new immigrant and as a student. I still remember the excitement of being able to move out of my basement apartment in North York on Micmac Crescent to renting a brand new condo on McLevin Avenue in Scarborough. I still remember the excitement of feeling that I was moving up in life when I rented a small bachelor unit at Harbour Square overlooking the lake right here in downtown Toronto. I still remember the rent back then in 1996. It was \$900 a month, including a parking spot. A few months later, the excitement wore off as I realized that if I was ever going to be able to save enough money to buy my own place, I could not pay so much in rent, and so, quite reluctantly, I moved from the ritzy place downtown, right on the lake, to a place where the rent was lower but the view was no longer the lake.

So I know all about the opportunity cost of renting and how important it is to make sure that rents are affordable, whether it is for a new immigrant who is working two jobs to make ends meet, a young family saving to buy their own place, a single parent struggling to make do on one salary, a senior on a fixed income, or any Ontarian, for that matter, who is renting.

Just how many people rent in Ontario? Well, about 29% of all Ontario households rent. That means that

about a third of Ontario households or families live in rental units. This includes private rentals, social housing and transitional housing. To put a number on it, there would be about 1.3 million households that rent in Ontario. This bill that we are debating would cover about a million of these households. So, Speaker, this is a really important bill when you think about the fact that it's going to impact close to a million families in Ontario.

The goal of this bill is very, very simple. It provides stability to rents in Ontario. Under the current system, rents are indexed to inflation or, more accurately, the consumer price index. Put quite simply, annual rent increases move with the rate of inflation. This has worked quite well in the past, but recent fluctuations in Ontario's consumer price index have resulted in a 2012 guideline that does not reflect the economic circumstances of those who rent. These proposed amendments will change the rent increase guideline to provide more certainty, both to renters and landlords.

**0940**

What exactly is the new guideline? I know we've talked about it a little bit in this chamber already, but I'd like to very quickly go over it. Essentially, the guideline remains the same, but what we are doing is, we are providing a floor and a ceiling to it. What this means is that in years when the inflation rate is such that the rental guideline increase under the current rules would be less than 1%, the rental increase floor would be 1%. What this does is it ensures that landlords get a reasonable rate of return on their investments. Conversely, should inflation be runaway so that the current formula results in rent increases greater than 2.5%, the increase will be limited to 2.5%. The proposed changes, if passed, would provide stability and affordability for renters during these uncertain economic times, and at the same time recognize that landlords require modest rent increases so that they have an incentive to maintain their rental properties.

The bill also has another provision. It would require that the annual rent increase guideline formula be reviewed every four years. I think this is a very, very important clause in here, to allow for a regular review as time, circumstances and the economy change. Maintaining the current guideline formula—just provide a floor and a ceiling—is what essentially this bill is about.

So why are we making these changes? These changes are important, given our current economic circumstances. I'm proud to say that under the Liberal government, on average, rent increases have been very modest of late, yet there have been some swings in the rent increases that make planning and budgeting difficult. Let me give you an example. In 2011, the rent increase was minimal. In fact, it's the lowest rent increase on record; it was 0.7%. But in 2012, under the current guidelines, it was 3.1%, so that's quite a bit of a swing. While the rent increases themselves may not be outrageous, it's the swing between 0.7% in 2011 and 3.1% in 2012 which makes it difficult for renters to budget their money.

When averaged out, the average rent increase over the past five years has been a reasonable 1.7%. Like I said,

it's the year-to-year swings that can be challenging for people, especially those who are on a fixed income or on very tight budgets. What this bill does is let a renter know that, at most, her rent will increase by between 1% and 2.5%. It lets the landlords know that at the very least they will get a 1% rent increase. It provides two things that everyone needs, especially people on tight budgets: stability and reasonability.

I said earlier that this bill is also fair to landlords, because not only does it allow a 1% floor; it also allows landlords to increase the rent by more than 2.5% by applying to the Landlord and Tenant Board for above-guideline rent increases in cases, for example, of extraordinary increases in municipal taxes and charges, in cases of capital expenses that are allowable, or increased costs related to security services.

This bill is just another positive step in the long list of things this Liberal government has done to help renters across Ontario. Our record speaks for itself. The Residential Tenancies Act in 2006 established strong rent regulations to keep rent affordable for tenants. We have afforded tenants across Ontario the lowest year-over-year increase of any government in recent memory, at an average of just 1.9%, and as I mentioned earlier, last year the rent increase was just 0.7%, the lowest on record in the history of Ontario.

As always, this bill is the result of broad consultation. We have heard from thousands of tenants, landlords and housing providers before coming up with these changes. Personally, I know that this is just the sort of thing that people in my riding need: affordable, predictable rent increases.

I wholeheartedly support this bill. It is about the lives of everyday Ontarians, making their lives just a little bit better. In an inherently uncertain world, what this bill tries to do is to inject a little bit of certainty—and I don't know how anybody can argue against this—certainty and reasonable rents for my friends and constituents who live on Paisley Boulevard; certainty and reasonable rents for my friends and constituents who live along Bloor Street just east of Dixie; certainty and reasonable rents for my constituents who live along Bloor Street just west of Dixie; certainty and reasonable rents for the many students and young professionals who rent in the downtown core in the new high-rises all around Square One.

As many of you know, my riding houses the wonderful Sheridan College, so we have a lot of young people now in Mississauga in the downtown core, living there, pursuing their college and university degrees for three, four years. They rent a lot of spaces in my riding, and it's really important that I be able to advocate on their behalf and ensure that their rents are affordable.

Certainty and reasonable rents for the folks who live along Hurontario in all those high-rises that dot that street in my riding from the 403 to the Queensway; certainty and reasonable rents for my friends who live in all those buildings along Confederation Parkway; certainty and reasonable rents for my friends who live in Park Tower; certainty and reasonable rents for my constituents who

live in all those Kaneff buildings in my riding; certainty and reasonable rents for all my folks who live in the iconic Absolute towers; certainty and reasonable rents for all my friends who live off Havenwood and those who live off Dundas; certainty and reasonable rents for all those people who live on Mississauga Valley Boulevard—Speaker, I could keep going on and on because there is no end to the number of rental buildings in my riding. There are so many rental and condo buildings in my riding, and certainty and reasonable rents for so many people cannot be anything but good, not just for people in my riding but for people all across Ontario.

The reason I know the names of every street in my riding is simple. It is because I have visited every building in my riding not once but multiple times. I have knocked on their doors and listened to their concerns, and I know that affordable rent is very, very important for every single constituent of mine.

It is so important for you folks back home that you can have some extra money left over for a piano class. That's what this bill is about. It's about ensuring that people on tight budgets can budget properly and have a little bit of money left over for those extra things that make life a little bit better: a little bit of extra money so your daughter can go to that math class; a little bit of extra money left so that when you finally make that trip home, you can buy gifts for the folks back home; a little bit of extra money to buy the pretty dress your daughter has been bugging you for; a little bit of extra money left over so that you can save some money for the down payment you need to buy that home you have always wanted.

Mr. Speaker, this is essentially what this bill is about. It's about allowing us a chance to chase our dreams, small and big, and turn that into a reality. That is what this bill at its very essence is about. It's a little disappointing when members on the opposite side try and turn this into an issue about heating or electricity. Those are all good issues, but I think this bill should be debated on its own merits, which is about providing certainty and reasonable rents for Ontarians—for every Ontarian across this province. It would be nice if the debate could be limited to the basic premise of this bill rather than talking about home heating or coffee makers or whatever else it is that my respected colleagues on the other side want to talk about.

This bill is very simple and I really hope that it will have the support of the entire House. I really cannot find anything wrong with it. All we are doing is ensuring that the rents are pegged to inflation, but we provide a floor and a ceiling and we make sure that it's fair to landlords as well, so that reasonable housing stock in Ontario for rental buildings continues to grow and everybody has a good, reasonable return when they are a landlord.

I know that many of us here are renters. Many of you rent here and I'm sure you would appreciate that your rents, wherever they are in downtown Toronto—I know many of you are from ridings across the province and you rent downtown here. I'm sure you would appreciate the certainty as well.



So let's just stick to the facts and let's not muddy the waters by discussing all sorts of irrelevant issues that have absolutely nothing to do with this bill.

I have been talking to renters in my riding about this bill. I have been telling them that this is a great bill but it's conditional: It can only pass the House if we get support from across the aisle. So they're counting on you folks to vote in support of this bill so that they can be assured that they will have affordable housing.

**0950**

In conclusion, Speaker, all I'm going to say one more time is that this bill is about allowing Ontarians a little bit of flexibility, letting them have a little bit of money left in their budget so that they can save for the future; so that they can provide an education for their children; so that they can buy that home they've always wanted; so that if they've immigrated, Canada does truly become the land of their dreams and they can own their own home. That is what this bill is about.

I'm really looking forward to all-party support. This is one of those good, motherhood bills. There's absolutely nothing wrong. It's fiscally prudent, and I look forward to support from everybody.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 19. Rental affordability is an important aspect of quality of life for Ontarians. It's understandable that we should be concerned with it and that we would work to ensure that rental rates stay reasonable.

Maybe it's a given that we are disappointed from time to time. I think this is a thin bill that is doubtful to change anything. It doesn't appear to address some of the pressing issues that are facing landlords and tenants across the province at the moment, and it seems like evidence of the growing disconnect between the government and the people of Ontario.

Bill 19 doesn't appear to contain measures that would do anything to create more affordable housing spaces or help municipalities cope with the mounting costs of operating their existing stock of affordable housing. It won't help open up new rental units or encourage landlords who are wrestling with the mounting burden of HST and skyrocketing hydro costs.

My predecessor, Joyce Savoline, who watched over this portfolio in her capacity as PC municipal affairs critic, cautioned the government time and time again that Ontario's rental housing stock was eroding as a side effect of the arrival of the HST. To that, I would add that the side effects of the government's extravagant green energy policy and its lavish feed-in tariff program have made matters worse.

Now the government is asking tenants to absorb the cost of the government's blue-sky energy policy. If this government wants to help tenants and landlords in Ontario, it can start by returning the attention of the House to Bill 4. That bill was approved by the majority of this House, and it deserves to be brought back here for third reading. I will not, however, be supporting Bill 19.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to stand to respond to the comments from my colleague from Mississauga East-Cooksville. She mentioned a couple of issues in regards to families having a little bit of extra money at the end of the day for that dress that my daughter has been bugging me for. How did you know my daughter's been bugging me for a dress? Except, we've got to add the HST on to that. What about those piano lessons that I'd love to put my son in? We have to add the HST on top of that. What about some of the soccer lessons and all the other incidentals that we'd love to provide for our families? Yet, on top of that, we have to add the HST on to everything—one of the measures that this government was in cahoots with their federal partners in enacting on the backs of the residents of this province.

The other thing she mentioned a couple of times was the certainty of reasonable rents—I think I'm quoting you well—certainty in reasonable rents. Of course, we would all love to have certainty in every measure of our lives. I'd certainly like to know how long I'm going to be on this earth for, and I certainly would like it to be for another 100 years, but that's not reasonable.

We do agree that there has to be some certainty, but there's some hypocrisy in that message. There's some hypocrisy in those talking points, because at the same time you're saying that you're going to provide certainty in rents, from 1% to 2.5%, you're saying that for all public sector workers, there is no certainty that their wages are going to be increased—no certainty whatsoever.

What you're saying in fact is, the only certainty is that you're not going to be able to afford the things you did the day before we enact this budget. That is really sending a signal that times are going to be tougher under this Liberal government, under the budget as it is proposed today. That's why we're pleased to bring in some other measures that maybe will give the certainty that people can live affordably and comfortably, with dignity and respect.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'm not sure what province some of the members opposite are living in.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, we just had 46,000 full-time jobs created this month in this province and over 3,000 part-time jobs. That's a record that neither party opposite—certainly, it takes many years for Manitoba to create that many jobs, and I know a little bit more about that than many members here.

We have arguably the biggest construction boom going on in the city. You cannot walk a block without seeing a half a dozen tower cranes. There is no city in North America or in the Western world right now that has the construction boom that this province has—dramatic growth rate.

You're right: It's because of this party. We're in favour of the HST, as is the party opposite's federal cousin. That reduced the friction of investment.

If these folks actually understood the economy, Mr. Speaker, they would have to do nothing more than walk three blocks, knock on one of the construction companies and ask the manager of the property—the member from Burlington should do this—about what the impact of the HST has been on reducing the cost of construction, which is then passed on to tenants in lower rent.

My mother, who is about to become one of Ontario's newest citizens, is out looking for apartments this week, and she finds it extraordinarily affordable, high quality, loves the city. I think she's more enthusiastic, Mr. Speaker, about this province than many of the members opposite. We sometimes in our generation take for granted the extraordinary economic boom and great times.

To my friend from Kenora—Rainy River, who made the comment about Michigan, go to Michigan where they have a 14% job recovery. Here we've created about 341,000 jobs and 121,000 net last year, over 46,000 this month alone. That's why we need to manage rent, because the demand for housing is unprecedented.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Mississauga East—Cooksville did a great job in speaking towards a bill that's actually two lines. The entire bill is two lines.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** He must have borrowed Vic's tie.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, Vic has a great collection of ties.

I commend her because she has been trying to speak on this bill for some time, and I commend her for that. But I think the member from Burlington made a very insightful remark on Bill 4. We passed a bill—the people listening this morning should know—the NDP had a bill, and we supported them in that bill, to take the HST off home heating. We actually believe in—do you know, that's going to affect the most vulnerable in our society. That would have given the normal person—right now, there's a bill in committee, Bill 30. Bill 30 is about healthy home renovation or something like that. You have to spend \$20,000, but to spend \$20,000, there's like \$1,500 worth of tax on that, and they give you a \$1,500 tax credit. This is a shell game. This thing here does nothing.

This bill should be passed now. They're in charge. All it does is control rent between a 1% increase as a minimum and 2.5%. This is a tragedy that we're spending this time, and the economy of Ontario is going towards the cliff, accelerating towards the cliff. There are 600,000 families that can't even afford to pay their rent and they're laughing about it. They're not paying attention to Ontario's future, and especially the pages here on their last day before Easter, their future is at risk. As I see it now, this bill does nothing—does nothing.

We're wasting all this time when we should be talking about some of the things the auditor said. The auditor has got it. He knows that we have a structural deficit in Ontario. The deficit is \$16 billion. The debt is soaring toward \$400 billion. And they're laughing about it. I can't believe it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Mississauga East—Cooksville, you have two minutes for a response.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I just heard the member from Durham speak about the fact that there are a lot of families who cannot afford their rent, and I agree with him. But where we and you differ, sir, is that when you had the chance to govern this province, those 600,000 families that you talk about were cut off social assistance. That's not the Liberal way; that's the Conservative way. I'm sorry to say that, since you brought it up. I stand by this bill. It's a good bill.

I've heard some criticism about the HST again. Well, this bill has nothing to do with the HST. This bill has to do with providing affordable and certain rents to people across Ontario.

**1000**

I want to make one thing clear: This bill is only going to become more and more important in Ontario, because more and more people are choosing to rent, sometimes just because of their lifestyles, as well as the fact that our demographics are such that a lot more people are living in urban areas by themselves and they often prefer to rent. This bill is only going to become more important. You just have to look at the construction cranes across Ontario, which is a good thing for the economy, where a lot of rental buildings and condos are being built, and many of them will be for rent. There are going to be more and more people renting for certain portions of their lives. Eventually, I hope everybody has a shot at buying that dream home.

So this is a very important bill. We stand by it. It's a very simple concept: The rental increase is pegged to inflation, which is fair, but we are providing a floor and a ceiling. I'd appreciate if everybody stuck to the facts and just discussed the bill on its own merits rather than bringing in extraneous factors that have absolutely nothing to do with this bill. Thank you so much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** It's my pleasure to stand before my colleagues in the House today and speak to Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Rent Increase Guideline), 2012, on behalf of the PC caucus today. The PC caucus cannot support this Bill 19, because we believe it's a piece of ineffectual and narrow legislation. The bill will not decrease costs for tenants or for landlords, it will not assist in opening up more rental units, and this piece of legislation is so narrow that it will not offer protection to those who are most vulnerable and need the protection the most. Bill 19 does nothing to improve anything for tenants or landlords.

According to the minister's own statistics, the average rent increase was 2.1% in the past 10 years and 1.7% in the last five years. These two figures fall within the arbitrary 1% and 2.5% range prescribed Bill 19. The bill will do absolutely nothing in terms of rent increases in Ontario. This is just another piece of window dressing we've become accustomed to from the other side of the House.



Under the current rent increase guideline, too many Ontarians, 1.31 million tenant households, are stretched to the limit trying to pay their household bills, including their rents. We know that some 20% of these households spend more than 50% of their income on rent. We have hundreds of thousands of people without work, while the HST and soaring hydro rates, along with increased fees, are eating away at what little disposable income Ontarians and people in Ontario have. Bill 19 will not change that reality, Mr. Speaker.

As for landlords, their operating expenses increase 6% each year. The government's ill-conceived energy and tax policies are driving landlords' costs through the roof. Under Dalton McGuinty, hydro rates have increased eight times since 2003, for a total of 84%—nothing to be proud of if you're talking about affordability for families—and if you're a family with a smart meter in your home, well, you've seen your bill go up a staggering 150%.

Also, the HST is driving up repair and maintenance costs for landlords. We must keep in mind that repair and maintenance costs are not subjected to any cap. The HST increased the cost of many services that landlords require; now subject to HST are snow removal, landscape costs, home improvement services. And the list goes on—it goes on and on and on.

Nickel-and-diming the people of Ontario to death is just not the way to do it. We need to get the job done. Landlords are losing money keeping their units available in the market. Landlords will either have to bear the costs themselves or pass the costs down to their tenants. Bill 19 will not change that reality either. The HST left some rental housing providers no choice but to use funds from their reserves. Reserve funds are meant for unexpected repairs and maintenance, and are a safety net to ensure the safety of their buildings, Speaker. When we do this, we're lowering the quality of the places where people are already living. If you've seen some of them, as I have while knocking on doors in Barrie, it's a disgrace, some of the conditions people have to live in.

Bill 19 fails to protect tenants. The rent increase guideline only applies to tenancies that have lasted longer than 12 months. In the real world, tenants move around. Landlords can increase their rents above the rent guidelines when their new tenants move in. The Residential Tenancies Act and Bill 19 are silent on these kinds of turnover rent increases. According to the CMHC, although the rent guideline for 2011 is 0.7%, apartment costs actually rose by 1.8%. This is a direct result of turnover rent increases, Speaker.

The former member from Burlington, Joyce Savoline, has repeatedly warned the government. She repeatedly warned the government that Ontario's rental housing stock was deteriorating as a result of the implementation of the HST.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Cam Jackson liked rent control.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** You guys have got to get out of your time machine here.

According to the CMHC, the Ontario vacancy rate has decreased from 3.4% in the spring of 2010 to 2.2% in the

fall of 2011. The steady decrease in the vacancy rate in Ontario and the high cost of living as a result of this party's HST only exacerbated the problem with turnover rent increases. Average Ontario tenants are finding it increasingly more difficult to acquire affordable housing. Bill 19 could have offered more adequate protection to tenants, and sadly, Speaker, it's powerless in terms of protecting tenants against unaffordable turnover rent increases.

Affordable housing is an essential need, especially in Barrie, Speaker, where 5,000 families—not people, 5,000 families—are waiting for affordable housing.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the members on the government side to come to order, please.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** The Ontario Human Rights Commission declares, "The right to shelter, to have one's own bed to sleep in, a roof over one's head, a place where one's person and possessions are safe is a human right." Having a place to call home gives people the basis on which everything else in life begins. Without it there's no hope to maintain employment or get education and necessary training to break that cycle of poverty.

All tenants should be protected against unaffordable rent increases. However, 300,000 tenant households are living in accommodations that are not even covered by the Residential Tenancies Act. This is a long-standing flaw of the act, Speaker. When one of these 300,000 tenant households goes to the tenant advocacy agencies, they're being turned away because they are not covered under the law. Bill 19 was an excellent opportunity to extend protection to these families, yet the government chose to do nothing to help the 300,000 households and just apply their window dressing.

Bill 19 fails to address the real issue, Speaker. Bill 19 was introduced by the minister as her response to the one-year anomaly that we saw with rent increases going from 0.7% this year and the 3.1% increase we saw the following year. The root cause of these anomalies was not economic instabilities, as the minister calls it; the root cause is the government's inability to properly manage Ontario's economy, plain and simple. It is the government's decision to force the HST on Ontarians in their blind pursuit of costly energy experiments, with absolutely no regard to the impact on the hard-working families of Ontario and their hydro bills.

The guideline is based on the Ontario consumer price index, and we all know it's the minister's and the government's policies that caused the cost of living in Ontario to soar in the past several years. The rent increase guideline has just spiked up with it. If Bill 19 is going to do anything at all, it's going to limit landlords' and tenants' ability to adjust to new economic realities by arbitrarily limiting the range of rent increases to 1% to 2.5%.

Why won't the government focus their efforts on cleaning up their economic mess instead of proposing frivolous amendments? Bill 19 is just completely missing the mark. The tenants' groups know this legislation won't

really change a thing. It's an attempt by the government to really be seen as doing something at a time when I believe real, substantive change is necessary. It's quite ironic that this government has crafted a piece of legislation to narrowcast a message to such a select group of stakeholders, and even the group they're trying to appease has called it a failure.

Bill 19 presented a real opportunity to carry out more effective and beneficial reform of the rental housing system and cut red tape. For example, the government could have simplified the system and offered more help to landlords navigating through the bureaucratic system.

I'd like to quote from a small landlord from Brockville: "Not many have the time, the patience or the resources to litigate these matters. It is the opinion of a small landlord that the system, which has seen benefits over the years, has to be simplified, the process more friendly.... One has no idea until they experience this bureaucracy from a person with no idea of where to start, the frustration of where to turn or what to do now. To go to the tribunal to be turned away because of an incorrect process, incorrect form" being filled out, "to hear that the tenant has access to duty counsel, while the landlord has no support." That's a quote from a small landlord.

In conclusion, the PC caucus simply can't support Bill 19, Speaker. It's not in the best interests of Ontarians. It's window-dressing, a smokescreen at best. The minister should go back to the drawing board and do some substantive thinking and get a real bill that does real things to help the people and landlords of Ontario.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I would like to welcome my parents and mentors to the Legislature today: Gary and Susan McNaughton, owners of McNaughton's in Newbury and from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** While we're on a roll, it gives me great pleasure to introduce my mother, Mary Murray, my best friend and soon to be one of Ontario's newest residents, who is in the members' gallery.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'd like to welcome the family of page Emma Lang, with us today. They're here from Vermilion Bay: Her parents, Karl and Debbie, and her brother, former page Zach Lang. I'd like to welcome them.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I have the pleasure of welcoming an official delegation from Argentina, who are here to meet with our organizing committee about the successful bid and plans to host the 2015 Pan/Parapan American games. Please welcome María Celia Sánchez, Minister of Sports for the province of San Luis; Ivana Bianchi, National Congress representative of San Luis; Hernan

Cancio, San Luis program manager of sports events; Luciana Vajnenko, project manager for Gliocchi Marketing Agency; Ignacio Jakim, legal representative for Gliocchi Marketing Agency; and Aaron Glyn Williams, manager of partner relations at Toronto 2015. Bienvenido a Ontario.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** I'd like to introduce a couple of guests from the University of Windsor here, some fine representatives from Windsor: Andre Capaldi and Caroline Jacobsen. Welcome.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, you continue to insist that the Canadian charter will not allow you to implement a legislated public sector wage freeze, but two decisions have recently made it clear that a legislated wage freeze can be implemented in a situation where there are pressing fiscal circumstances.

There are 600,000 unemployed people in Ontario. Ontario's deficit is now three times larger than the other provincial deficits combined, and we spend \$10 billion annually on interest payments. If these are not pressing fiscal circumstances, I don't know what are. Minister, when are you going to stop putting Ontario's future at risk and legislate a public sector wage freeze?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, 46,000 more Ontarians had a job last month than did the month before. The economy is growing again. Our tax plan for jobs and growth is working. The budget plan for jobs we've laid out is the right plan. We do have to get back to balance by 2017-18, and we will. We will do it by working with our partners in the public and broader public sectors.

It was interesting: The federal government had a wage freeze, but when did they do it? They did it after consultation. They did it after bargaining. By the way, their wage freeze wasn't a freeze; it was 1.5% per year. So we don't need a lecture from them about how to do things.

What I can tell you is, our jobs plan is working. More Ontarians are working. Unemployment's lower than it has been in three years. The future is bright—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The reality is that we still have a net job loss since re-election. We still have almost 600,000 unemployed people in Ontario, and it's simply not acceptable.

The international credit rating agencies agree with us. On April 3, Moody's stated that "Canadian federal debt is low and the trend is favourable," but they continue to warn Ontario of a possible downgrade and question your ability to stick to your stated fiscal plan. Mr. Speaker, this is attributable to nothing else than eight years of outrageous Liberal spending.

Minister, every day that you waver on the question of a legislated wage freeze increases the chance of a further



downgrade in Ontario's credit rating. Why are you taking these chances with Ontario's future?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That member and her party and their federal cousins ought to stop running down Ontario. You are undermining our growth. You are undermining our future. You are going to cost jobs. Mr. Speaker, it's time they stand up for this province. It's time the Conservatives across the country—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Order. Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do know what is up, and it's the volume. Now, I have reminded members in the past that when I'm asking for quiet and we finally do settle down, it is not the time for the last interjections. It is the time in which I want quiet.

*Final supplementary.*

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** There's only one party in this House that's running down Ontario, and that's this Liberal government, by refusing to take the necessary action to save our economy.

The reality is, your party is all over the map on this credit issue. On the one hand, you're saying the charter prevents you from taking action. On the other hand, you're saying you'll take action if you need to, somewhere down the road. You've already said, on Monday, that the budget has built in zero increases for public sector workers. So if you truly mean to hold it at zero, instead of just talking about it, the time for action is now. Stop the charade. Save the province \$2 billion and legislate a public sector wage freeze.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This government, this party, will continue to stand up for Ontario. We will continue to create jobs. We will work our way back to balance, and we will do it by working together with all Ontarians.

It is time for that party—their idea of a jobs plan is to hire poll clerks and DROs and sign companies, to have an election. I think they're trying to undermine our credit rating by their comments and the comments of the federal government. I ask them, I urge them, to work with this government, work with all Ontarians: 46,000 net new—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I have been—actually, I've been a little bit patient on this little outburst, but I wish I had a magic bullet, and the magic bullet would be to have you hear yourselves.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I don't need that.

I'm trying to be sincere about how we are here, and I ask each of you, inside, to figure out how that is going to work.

New question.

1040

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. Speaker, the Minister of Health is now on record with a

menu of excuses for not stepping in to stop the waste of millions of dollars and the erosion of patient care at Ornge.

Yesterday, the former Minister of Health confirmed what we've been saying for months. In his sworn testimony before the public accounts committee, Mr. Smitherman confirmed that none of the excuses proffered by the minister are credible, that in fact the minister not only had authority but also had the responsibility.

In case, Speaker, you missed Mr. Smitherman's CTV clip last night, here's what he said: "If I was the minister, there's no way in hell that Chris Mazza makes \$1.4 million," said Mr. Smitherman.

Speaker, now that the minister has been indicted by both the Auditor General and the former Minister of Health, how much longer will she insist on holding on to her job?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The former minister and the current minister both have acknowledged the challenges with Ornge and both have acknowledged that the important steps we've taken to deal with the situation are very important. Let's just review them.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, the call for performance agreement being weak—you know, in the bill we have before the House, we've got a new performance agreement. We need to pass the bill, Mr. Speaker. The bill has stronger conflict-of-interest rules, increased audit, more detailed financial control—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Northumberland and the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and the Minister of the Environment will come to order.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has acted in an appropriate fashion, in a timely fashion, as information became available. We stand behind her. We stand with her, as does her predecessor.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Interesting, but not surprising, that both the current and the former minister have bonded on this issue. Both have been subject to a scathing Auditor General's report. Both have been exposed for failing to exercise their oversight responsibilities and for protecting the public interest and for allowing the waste of millions of scarce health dollars. Neither accept responsibility for the scandal over which they preserved—Mr. Caplan took the fall for Mr. Smitherman. We'd like to know who the current minister is going to designate as her scapegoat.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the new minister brought in a new performance agreement. She has put in place a new board of directors. She has put in place new senior executives. These are all the appropriate steps that needed to be taken. They were taken in a timely fashion. We've called in the police to look at criminal matters, Mr. Speaker. That's an appropriate thing to do, and we will continue to make the changes that are important to ensure that what happened doesn't happen again.

I'm proud of the role the minister has taken in this. She's done the appropriate thing in a timely fashion.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, it's clear that the wagons are being circled. The member for Willowdale was dispatched yesterday to obstruct the hearings to protect the Premier. The government House leader is scripted with embarrassing speaking notes to protect the minister. The Premier refuses to answer questions. The minister refuses to accept responsibility. The government refuses to respect the express will of this Legislature to form a select committee. And now, shame on the government House leader for refusing an express motion of the public accounts committee to continue hearings next week.

I ask the Premier, just how long does he think and does this government think that they can hide the truth?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Deputy?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I think it may be time to update the House. Yesterday, all I could hear at question period was that we were somehow trying to prevent testimony in front of the public accounts committee. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform members: yesterday, 12:30 p.m., Wendy Tilford, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Innovation; 1 p.m., George Smitherman, former Minister of Health; 1:30 p.m., Jamison Steeve, principal secretary to the Premier; 2 p.m., Ian Delaney, board chair of Ornge; 2:30, Cathy Worden, chief of staff, Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation. And I'm pleased to inform the House that there is a robust list of witnesses who are currently being scheduled for the weeks ahead as the public accounts committee continues this very important investigation into the Ornge controversy, one which is, as appropriate, being guided by a counsel, despite the efforts of that member to have the counsel fired yesterday.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, the Premier indicated that he didn't want to comment on specific proposals around the budget, and I respect that. But can the Deputy Premier confirm today that protecting health care is, in fact, a priority of this government?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we did that in the budget. We did that when we created family health teams. We did that when we hired 9,000 nurses. We did that when we increased medical school spaces by 23%. We did that by building 38 new hospitals in Ontario.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm unequivocally that this government is firmly committed to improving health care across Ontario. We've laid out a bold new plan for a better future, a more efficient future, and we welcome the

ideas that the leader of the third party has on all of these important issues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** As the Deputy Premier knows, we've heard from thousands of everyday people across Ontario who want health care to be a priority, but they're worried. They're worried about a proposed budget that will leave them waiting longer for the care that they need. In communities across Ontario, we've actually seen emergency rooms closed and we've seen nurses laid off. And that's with higher funding than what's currently being proposed by this government's budget. People tell us they're concerned about the deficit, but they want front-line care to be the priority.

Will the Deputy Premier agree that the patients waiting in the emergency rooms, not the CEOs in the boardrooms, need to be our priority?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm proud of the fact that Ontario now has the shortest wait times in the country for many major surgical procedures. I'm proud of the fact that we have nurse-practitioner-led clinics. I'm proud of the fact that we're introducing birthing centres. I'm proud of the fact that we're increasing funding for home care by 4%.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, we do put the priorities on front-line services. That's why we're keeping nurses in emergency rooms. That's why we're keeping teachers in classrooms. All the steps that the Minister of Health and this government have taken have improved care for all Ontarians. There's still more to do. I look forward to working with her and her colleagues as we continue to build the best health care system in the world.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In the lead-up to the budget, the Minister of Finance promised to take a hard line against the growing public sector CEO salaries, but the budget revealed a lot more of the same solutions that have not been working. Families have been told before that CEO salaries were frozen, but this year's sunshine list came out, and we saw a slew of executives getting raises yet again. When a hospital CEO gets more in a raise than most families can earn all year as their salary, there's something definitely wrong.

Does the Deputy Premier think that the government's measures thus far to get CEO compensation under control are actually working?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This government and this party are interested in more front-line nurses, and we've put them in place. We've expanded access to home care. We're building long-term-care beds. Mr. Speaker, we just brought forward legislation that creates the home retrofit credit, which will help seniors stay in their homes longer. This government and this party are all about the best possible health care; as the Minister of Health says, the right care in the right place at the right time. This budget builds on this government's record of building a better and stronger health care system for all Ontarians.



## EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Deputy Premier. Ontarians are worried that this budget doesn't do enough to spread the burden. They need assurances that vital health care services are going to be protected.

1050

A lot of people in rural communities, Speaker, like Grimsby are justifiably upset that their promised new hospital has been put on hold by this budget. Patients are being made to feel the pain while hospital CEOs bask in the glow of the sunshine list.

Jane from Owen Sound says, "Hospital CEOs are making ludicrous amounts of yearly salaries but yet we still [get] cut[s] [in] hospital housekeeping services." Lisa from Gananoque writes, "I would like to see a commitment that front-line workers in [hospitals] will not be cut."

What does the Deputy Premier say to people like Jane and Lisa who see hospital CEOs' salaries climb while front-line jobs get cut?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Here's what Mark from the OHA says, Mr. Speaker: "The government has put forward and funded \$5 billion in capital projects for hospitals. That's a terrific amount of money that's gone, in my view, to places that really need it in investment."

We have made record investments in new hospitals and new health care facilities, and we're proud of that.

Yes, we've had to slow down because of the financial circumstances we find ourselves in, but as we continue to build a bigger, better and stronger economy, we'll have the revenues in the future to move on those projects. We're proud of what we've been able to do today. We will continue to build on that progress, Mr. Speaker, because Bob and Pete and Jill and Gail all across Ontario want us to do that, and that's why they support this government and this party—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontarians simply demand that we make the best use of our resources, Speaker. That means putting dollars into front-line care, rather than into huge salaries and outrageous perks for the public sector executives.

Lily from Clinton writes, "Salary [and bonus] caps [for hospital CEOs] are a good idea." Will the Premier listen to concerned Ontarians like Lily?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of all the capital projects that are starting to come online over the next three years—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Essex, come to order.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** But if there's an election, Mr. Speaker, they all get put on hold, and that's what the risk is.

I say to the leader of the third party: We have to get back to balance by 2017-18. It's not good enough to put

out ideas, not cost them properly and, in fact, add to the deficit.

I look forward to hearing the rest of the ideas that the leader of the third party is going to bring forward. I look forward to working with her on getting these new hospital projects into the ground and under way. We will build more facilities, as well as improve home care. The right care in the right place at the right time: That's what this party and that's what this government are about.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, people in glass houses shouldn't be throwing stones. We've seen this finance minister's numbers bounce around from budget to economic statement to budget. It's quite funny.

People understand, very seriously, though, Speaker, that the province is facing tough challenges. New Democrats understand that as well. People are willing to do their part. But when they see hospital CEOs make off with huge salaries and outrageous perks, they don't feel like this government is looking after their best interests.

Linda from Sydenham writes, "I looked for a cap [on] hospital execs ... as well as elimination of bonuses.... Instead, this government is calling on the ordinary family to make sacrifices while the wealthy are not being forced to experience financial pain."

Will the Deputy Premier explain to Ontarians what this government is prepared to do to distribute precious health care dollars in a fairer way?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll remind the leader of the third party what this government's commitment is. Since 2003, we now have the shortest surgical wait times in the country. There are 3,400 more doctors working in this province, and 2.1 million families have a family doctor that didn't have one before. There are 12,600 more nurses working in this province than there were in 2003.

Now the Minister of Health has introduced a bold new policy that will help us move forward in this century to provide the right care at the right time and in the right place. That's what this party is about. That's what we're going to debate. Those are the investments we've made and that's what the future's all about, Mr. Speaker. That's what all Ontarians care about.

## AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Deputy Premier.

Yesterday, when Mr. Smitherman was in front of the committee, he did acknowledge that the Minister of Health had the full authority to step in at Ornge and that the performance agreement allowed her to intervene. That's certainly contrary to what we've been hearing in here.

We also heard the Premier's right-hand man, Jamison Steeve, say, "We as a government could have, and should have, done a better job."

Instead of taking responsibility, it now appears that the government is shamefully scapegoating the defenceless

staff at the Ministry of Health. So I ask the Deputy Premier, do you endorse these tactics, and will you today affirm your belief in ministerial accountability?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** All of us on this side of the House are proud of the fact that we've brought in a new performance agreement, that the minister moved to replace the board, the senior executives.

We are going to support the legislation that is before this House that creates protections for everything from whistle-blowers through to better financial accountability. We have taken and the minister has taken the appropriate steps at the appropriate time, as information was available. We're happy to be in front of committee. Yesterday you alleged that we were blocking it. The House leader has indicated how many of our staff are prepared; the Premier has taken dozens of questions, and the Minister of Health.

We've taken all the appropriate steps in a timely fashion as information became available, and we're also looking at the police investigation that's going on. That will add another piece to this situation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I say again to the Deputy Premier, you know, despite what you're saying, and your Premier and your minister have said, you have had all along the authority, as confirmed by Mr. Smitherman, to step in at Ornge, and you did not. The performance agreement allowed you to do it and you did not. You ignored the red flags. You didn't provide the oversight; we saw that in the report. And now you are engaging in a campaign of misinformation, stalling and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member will withdraw.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I will do so, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** And now it appears that the ministry staff are being maligned and you're trying to deflect responsibility on them.

I ask you today, instead of putting this campaign to smear others into high gear, will you show some integrity and hold the appropriate person accountable—the Minister of Health—and ask for her resignation?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Deputy?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Minister of Health took the appropriate steps at the appropriate time to deal with this circumstance and has answered questions on and on.

We have brought in a new performance agreement, a new board, new executives. We have legislation before this House that provides for stronger conflict-of-interest rules, increased audit, more detailed financial control, allows the minister to recover unspent funds, better public reporting, a new patient advocate, and links to pay-for-performance for executives.

All that's before this House in the form of legislation—all of that, Mr. Speaker. That builds on the Aud-

itor General's report, the minister's response, and the fact that the police are looking at this as well.

But instead of dealing with that legislation, that party wants an election. They want this legislation to die on the order paper instead of dealing with the real issues that are important to Ontarians. The Minister of Health has done all the appropriate things in a timely fashion as information became available. We stand behind her and the good work she's done—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Acting Premier. On Ornge, the current Minister of Health has blamed everything and everyone: a faulty accountability agreement, our federal tax status, opposition MPPs, and, of course, Mr. Smitherman.

Yesterday, the former Minister of Health said, "I just personally am not convinced, having again reviewed that agreement, knowing the ministry was the paymaster for the organization and with the powers of persuasion ... that there was not sufficient power to bring the organization to heel." Why doesn't the buck stop with the minister?

1100

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I again have to remind the member opposite that the minister has taken the appropriate steps in a timely fashion as information became available. We have said that. She sent in the Auditor General, who is an impartial source. He did a good piece of work on the challenges that came to be as a result of the original performance agreement. We're glad that he was there, and he acknowledged the important work the minister has done in dealing with a situation, frankly, that's unprecedented. We await the results of the OPP investigation as well. I'm confident that the minister has taken all of the appropriate steps in a timely fashion to address a situation that is unprecedented. We look forward to working on this more.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, again my question is to the Acting Premier. The problem is the blame game. This government's blame game is disgraceful. He had his faults, but under Mr. Smitherman's watch the salaries of Ornge executives were public. Here's another quote from Mr. Smitherman: "I cannot imagine a circumstance where I would have tolerated a situation where Dr. Mazza ended up making \$1.4 million and where the organization lost its focus." Apparently, secret sky-high salaries were something this minister was perfectly willing to tolerate. Why is this government letting the Minister of Health keep her job?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Minister of Health took all the appropriate steps in a timely fashion as information became available. We have a new performance agreement and a new board. No issue has had greater scrutiny by this House or by the media than this, which is



appropriate under the circumstances. We have great confidence in the minister. We have great confidence in the new performance agreement. We're very supportive of the bill that's before this House. We're very supportive of the fact that she called in the Auditor General. We're very supportive of the fact that after the forensic audits were done we called in the police. The Minister of Health has acted honourably. She has acted quickly and appropriately as information became available in what, frankly, sir, is a very unprecedented set of circumstances. She's done a terrific job—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, yesterday the member from Thornhill spoke about the economy as if it was all doom and gloom. He believes, and the PC party believes, that our economy isn't on the right track. However our recently released budget has been well received by people of all political stripes right across this great province. I believe that our budget has struck the right balance. Will the Minister of Finance please tell us Ontario's 2012 budget is moving Ontario forward and creating jobs?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yesterday we were hectoring that the Ontario economy is not working. In fact, we now know—44,000 new jobs last month alone. It builds on the 121,000 jobs that were created last year. Employment now is back to where it was before the greatest recession in this country's history since the downturn of the 1930s. Consumer spending is up. Business investment is at record levels. The economy is getting better. Jobs are coming back. This province is going to lead and continues to lead. We're proud of our record, we're proud of the budget and we'll speak more about this in terms of the jobs that are coming in the future. But to the member, 46,000 net new jobs the very day after this member said we were losing jobs—no credibility, no plan.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** The Minister of Finance provided us with a comprehensive and full answer. Ontario gained half of Canada's total. We added 46,000 jobs to our labour force. The number is eight times what the economists expected—the biggest single month result since last September.

Minister, the member from Thornhill said that our budget doesn't have a jobs plan and instead is heavy on rhetoric. He showed that he can count by listing off how many times he saw the words “consult,” “discuss” and “negotiate” in the budget. Well, I did some counting of my own: The word “jobs” appears in the budget 92 times. The word “economy” appears 88 times. In fact, all 69,354 words in the budget provided a strong plan for our economy and jobs.

Minister, can you discuss how Ontario is moving forward to a balanced budget while creating jobs and protecting health care and education?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The party opposite may think 46,000 jobs is a laughing matter. We're proud of that; we're proud of all Ontarians.

They have a jobs plan, too. They'll hire poll clerks and DROs. This will be a great boon for robocallers, Mr. Speaker, which their federal brethren have used so much.

Instead of an election, we ought to be focused on working together to build on the gains we've made in the last months. This economy is starting to take hold again. Vehicle sales are up. The economy is growing. Working together, we can keep building on this. We can create real jobs, high-paying jobs, more than the rest of the country last month—save and except they want to give poll clerks and DROs jobs, Mr. Speaker. Not us. We need a steady hand to keep this thing moving forward.

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the House leader. Speaker, members will know that the member from Willowdale is favouring his left side. The reason for that is no doubt as a result of the jobs that he received yesterday from the member for Guelph, who was jabbing him in the ribs to get him to raise his hand to vote against sitting next week for the public accounts committee. Now, perhaps the member from Guelph wasn't aware that he had already made a public commitment that we sit next week as a public accounts committee. To the member's credit, he abstained from the vote.

I say to the House leader now, given the fact that even the member from Willowdale was willing to sit next week, will he gather up the courage and say no to the political operatives in the Premier's office and call that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock, please. I'm going to permit the question, but I am going to remind everybody, on both sides, that this is the House business, and it's not common for us to talk about committee work. I would remind us to stay focused on the business of the House, but I will ask the House leader to respond.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I had a chance earlier to talk about the witnesses that appeared in front of the public accounts committee yesterday. The clerk has been working diligently to put together a robust list of witnesses for the next planned meeting of the public accounts committee.

The member talks about the fact that they want to meet next week, but what he hasn't told the House is that there are no witnesses to call next week, because debate and discussion went on, and in fact, there were no motions passed. So meeting next week, during constituency week, when many members of this House—I would suggest all members of this House have commitments back in their ridings, a chance to be in their constituency. Mr. Speaker, there is quite frankly no business for the committee to do.

We have plans to meet over the next Wednesday, the next following Wednesdays, when there's a very robust list of witnesses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** At the risk of using unparliamentary language, I have to say that what the government House leader has just said is not true. We have a list of some 20 witnesses that we can call within 24 hours who would love to be here. Will the House leader admit that what he's doing is simply obstructing a direction of the public accounts committee that we sit this coming week? He is now thwarting the expressed will of this House on two occasions: one, the expressed will of this Legislature that we have a select committee and now, the express will of the public accounts committee on which his members have the majority.

Will he agree to call a meeting of the public accounts committee for this coming Wednesday? We will supply witnesses gladly.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The will of this Legislature is set out in the standing orders in terms of the meetings that are held of the Legislature and constituency breaks in-between. During that constituency break—we've just had a budget—members of this Legislature have commitments, have meetings, have events planned in which they can go back and reconnect with their communities. That has been the tradition of this House.

1110

The honourable member talks about a motion that was sprung at the last minute during a session. From what I understand, due to his delaying tactics, they never got to vote on future witnesses coming forward.

The clerk of the committee has been tasked with putting together a robust series of witnesses who will be testifying at the public accounts committee over the regular meetings, which are scheduled for the following weeks.

We have co-operated with the opposition to bring these hearings to go, and we'll continue to co-operate with them.

#### EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My question is to le vice-premier ministre.

Yesterday, the Canadian Institute for Health Information released data on hospital performance. It reveals that Ontario spent more on hospital administration than any other jurisdiction in Canada.

Is the government willing to stop this sad situation and put a hard cap on CEO salaries?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd remind the member we have a lot more hospitals than the rest of the country, Mr. Speaker, so that kind of makes sense. I'd also remind her of what Mr. Drummond pointed out to us: that, in fact, Ontario's expenses are the lowest per capita in the country.

We welcome the findings of the Canadian institute of health. We thank them for their report. They're a leader in public accounting. We believe very strongly in keeping track and measuring. We're the first government to introduce those kinds of things. We will embrace this data as a tool to improve patient care.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome that report. The member opposite can take numbers any which way. As I understand it—I haven't had the opportunity to read the whole report myself—Ontario hospitals actually stand up very well to the rest of the country, in part as a result of the increasing investments we've made in health care since 2003.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, let me spell it out for the member. Ontario administrative costs, as a percentage of total costs, are the highest in Canada. Ontario spent more on hospital administrators than any other jurisdiction in Canada.

The province is moving ahead with pay-for-performance that gives CEOs huge bonuses. The pay-for-performance—let me quote what the Harvard School of Public Health says about pay-for-performance: It does not improve patient outcomes, but you keep moving on this way anyway.

The government is letting pay-for-performance balloon the bonuses of CEOs while taking away from patient care. Is the Deputy Premier willing to put a hard cap on CEO salaries to make sure that we come in line with the rest of Canada and that precious dollars go to health care?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, I would remind the member opposite that in 2003, we had the longest wait-times in Canada. We started tracking that for the first time, keeping track of wait times for major surgical undertakings, and now we have the shortest in the country across a number of them.

Mr. Speaker, I remind the member opposite that we are moving to more home-based care, keeping seniors in their homes longer. That is the important part of the budget. That's the important part of what the Minister of Health has done in terms of the bold plan she has outlined to provide better care at the right time and in the right place.

We're going to continue to make those investments and focus on what's important to people: better care at the right time in the right place.

#### CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** My question today is for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. I've heard a lot about positive job creation in the Legislature of late: 170,000 jobs announced in the budget last week; 800 jobs created just last week through the province in the auto sector.

It's evident that Ontario is rebounding in our economy. Things are turning around. People are looking to invest, which is great for Ontario. One thing, however,



that has been missing is a discussion about the impact in the construction industry. I'm getting calls in my riding in Pickering-Scarborough East about this.

Can the minister please give an overview of the construction sector in Ontario and explain what benefits Ontarians will see in the growth of the economy?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Ontario's construction sector is indeed healthy, and it's growing. In fact, just look around the greater Toronto area today. You'll see more cranes than at any time in our history. Construction jobs are up 17% from 10 years ago. In 2011, employment in construction grew by 3.2%.

Opposition members have repeatedly scoffed at our efforts to create construction jobs. They refer to them, Mr. Speaker, as temporary, but the fact is, there are more than 480,000 Ontarians working in the construction sector today who strongly disagree. Unfortunately for those construction workers, the PCs would rather cause an election than support a budget that creates another 100,000 jobs, through our infrastructure investments in that budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Jobs are a very serious issue in my riding of Pickering-Scarborough East and all of Ontario. It's encouraging to hear how the government's plans continue to create jobs.

We've also heard a lot about the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan games in recent months. People in my riding of Pickering-Scarborough East are absolutely thrilled that the aquatic centre is coming to Pickering-Scarborough East—right in my riding—and will be the home of a state-of-the-art aquatic facility, a wonderful legacy facility. Ontarians are excited about hosting a major international sporting event because of the opportunity the games offer to create a lasting economic, social and athletic legacy for our province.

My question to the minister is, how are the preparations for the games contributing to our economy and how are they creating jobs?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** To the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the minister responsible for the 2015 Pan Am Games.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you to the member of Pickering-Scarborough East for her question and for her enthusiasm. I share that excitement, and I am pleased to tell the House that work is well under way to deliver an outstanding set of games. In fact, joining us in the gallery today are visitors from the government of Argentina, and they share our excitement, too, and have come to see how Ontario is preparing to host this great event.

The 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games will be one of the single largest economic drivers in the greater Golden Horseshoe region over the next three years. As you know, Mr. Speaker, construction has already begun on the Pan Am village in the West Don Lands. That project alone is 5,200 jobs. We're creating greater investment in new and existing sports and infrastructure. That, sir, will create 15,000 jobs in construction and game operations, on top of the 5,200 jobs at the athletes'

village. Mr. Speaker, we're excited and proud to host the games and to help deliver thousands of new jobs to Ontarians.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** My question today is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, your government's failed energy strategy is drawing ire from thousands of families in Ontario. Now it seems that your failed policies are affecting developers. Minister, the proverbial blades are falling off here. Two lawsuits have been launched against your government and, just recently, this week, a \$1-billion lawsuit from an offshore wind developer.

Minister, last week, the first lawsuit was tagged at \$300 million. This week's lawsuit is \$1 billion. How much can we expect next week's lawsuit to be? Minister, can you tell us, the taxpayers of Ontario, how much this is going to cost and who's going to be footing the bill?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Just so I can get some clarification on where the party opposite is going, my recollection is that they supported the decision not to proceed with the power plant in Mississauga. I thought that was the case. I'm hoping that's still the case. My recollection was—and maybe things have changed, because you never know which way the wind blows—that they were supportive of the moratorium on offshore wind, and maybe that's not the case. It would be enormously helpful, Speaker, to have their advice on these important issues.

We have some things that we agree on. We agree on a moratorium—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I just spent 60 seconds listening to people heckle while the question was being put from your own side and the same happening when the people are answering. You're having two different conversations while people are asking the question and trying to answer.

1120

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** There are issues that we agree on: We agree on a moratorium on offshore wind and we agree that the power plant should not go on that site in Mississauga. We invite the party opposite to join us in working for the people of Ontario and not force an unnecessary election.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Minister, the National Post headline today was, "The Ontario green energy ship is taking on water...." Minister, you're the captain here. Why can't you admit that your energy experiments are failing? Your government has created this mess. If you can't handle this file, step aside, or be responsible and immediately cancel these unaffordable FIT contracts. Minister, when will you admit that your unaffordable energy nightmare has failed?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Last night I was at the AgriSolar board meeting in Chatham, meeting with hundreds of farmers, rural Ontario residents, who are

enthusiastic about green energy, who are participating in green energy and who gave the energy approach a standing ovation just last night.

Over the next two years, we're going to see more wind, solar and bio hooked up in Ontario than ever in our history. We're going to see more parts for that manufactured in Ontario than ever in our history. We're going to see more jobs created in Ontario than ever in our history. It's time that the party opposite focused on the real issues for Ontarians—jobs, which last month were up; prosperity for our communities, which last month has been up—instead of forcing an unnecessary election, costing us millions of dollars.

### HAZARDOUS WASTE

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** This question is for the Minister of the Environment. Waste haulers in Ontario currently require a licence—it's called an environmental compliance approval—to transport and dispose of toxic waste. Even with licensing, the Auditor General has found discrepancies in the transport of hazardous waste in half of the cases. Given the risks to human health and the environment, why is this government reducing oversight of the transport of hazardous waste by removing the requirement for licences in most cases?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member would know, of course, that in fact it is not happening that there's a reduction in oversight. The oversight continues as assiduously as it has in the past.

The Ministry of the Environment has, on its front line, a number of people who are working on these issues. You should know that one of the challenges that we face is that many have not moved into the electronic age in that particular field, as I have. I recognize that, as they do, we will be able to do things even more expeditiously than we have in the past.

So I want to assure the member that we have addressed many of the concerns that the Provincial Auditor has brought to our attention. We in fact begin addressing those as soon as he brings them to our attention, even before the auditor's report happens to come out, whenever it does during a particular time during the year.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Contrary to what the minister says, there are real concerns here. Ecojustice and the Canadian Environmental Law Association do have concerns about this.

Cost-cutting and deregulation now seem to be the priorities of the Ministry of the Environment, not protection of Ontario's air, water and land. In his recent annual report Ontario's Environmental Commissioner reported that the ministry budget has fallen by 45% since 1993 and that the ministry does lack the capacity to enforce environmental regulations.

Now the McGuinty government is moving ahead with yet another cut: a 9% cut in the budget to the ministry. Is the government removing the requirement for a permit to transport toxic waste because it no longer has the resources to pay staff to license these applications?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I want to assure the member that, unlike the mid-1990s, when the NDP government of the day was confronted with difficult circumstances, we are ensuring that all front-line services are being maintained within the Ministry of the Environment.

There are difficult decisions that do have to be made. I remember that the NDP government in Saskatchewan in the 1990s had to, they believed, close 52 rural hospitals in all of Saskatchewan. So everybody looks at all of these issues and tries to determine how to do things as efficiently as ever. We believe that, through moving into the electronic age in the Ministry of the Environment, we are going to be able to deal with these matters expeditiously and efficiently, as I know the people of Ontario want to ensure that we are going to do.

### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Our government understands that we need to continue to strengthen our economy and position our province to create and attract more jobs. This means we need to protect the services that Ontarians need most, including our support to help unemployed older workers get back on their feet. That's the only way we can continue on the positive trend that the employment numbers have shown this morning. Half of all jobs created in Canada were in Ontario. Our focus on job creation and employment is working.

The targeted initiative for older workers, or TOW, is an important program that helps my constituents upgrade their skills and work experience for unemployed workers ages 55 to 64. Is the minister still committed to supporting older workers through TOW?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank the member from Windsor West and also recognize the extraordinary leadership she has provided, not just as an MPP but in a lifetime of service as the executive director of employment and social services for the city of Windsor. We are very lucky to have such an informed voice in this House.

This is a challenging program, because it is a program for smaller communities and rural Ontario. The funding under this program, under agreement with the federal government, is restricted to communities of under 250,000. As has happened with so many other things, this program is being severely curtailed by the federal government, our principal funding partner. This will hit hard our smaller and rural communities who are struggling. They don't have some of the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** —and the intensity of economic development that we have in some of our larger cities. So I'm hoping all members will take time to put some pressure on the federal government to come to the table on this agreement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** The minister has mentioned that thousands of older workers continue to be ineligible for the TOW program because of its eligibility criteria. I



would like to join the minister in calling on the federal government to support hard-working Ontario families.

As the former director of employment and social services in Windsor, I certainly know the benefits of this program and all the retraining and supportive programming that we have available. We need the official opposition to co-operate with our government so that we don't trigger an unnecessary election that would further harm the economy and put our families at risk. We should be putting the interests of Ontarians ahead and work forward on our five-year plan to balance the budget.

What is the minister doing to ensure that all Ontarians have access to employment services?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We are continuing with our commitment, which is over \$1 billion. This provides 170 service providers with 327 funded service delivery sites. So far in the last fiscal year, we have served over 610,000 Ontarians. In addition to that, our colleges and universities are driving about an 86% employment rate upon completion, and it was mentioned earlier that we have 46,000 new jobs this month alone. One could say that might be an aberration, except that since June 2009, we have had 345,000 jobs, over half of all the jobs created. That's a successful job strategy if I've ever heard of one.

#### PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. Since he has yet to release an updated budget, I did a little research of my own. What I found is that the sunshine list could best be described as a supernova list when it comes to reading the explosive salaries of the TO2015 organizing committee. It starts with the CEO at over \$550,000 per year, and others coming in at just under \$300,000 per year. That's only 17 people costing Ontario families \$21.6 million by the time the games start.

When will the minister release the budget so we can confirm that we can afford these astronomical salaries and ensure Ontario tax dollars are not being wasted?

1130

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister responsible for the Pan Am Games.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I appreciate that the member opposite is also concerned about the viability of these games because of how critical it is for all of us to have a successful games going forward. That is why we're providing the necessary oversight. That is why we are taking the necessary steps to ensure that every aspect of the game is concerned.

We now have the majority of the games signed. We have a little bit extra to go, but we will do everything necessary to ensure that it's done.

I'm very confident in the outstanding work that 2015 is doing to ensure that we have a relevant and very adequate set of games.

I, again, congratulate members from the other countries who are here witnessing the good work that we're

doing and complimenting the actions that this government has taken.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** I thank the minister for his generalities, but the thing is, Ontarians have the right to know how much the Pan Am Games are costing them and if they can afford it.

It isn't just those organizing committee salaries that are the issue. We don't know who's on the organizing committee. Only 11 people appear on the website that we're always referred to, yet 17 people were discovered on the sunshine list. Then there's also the board of directors, the management and the secretariat. Redundancy is waste. The only thing that is clear is that the minister's arm's-length governance over the games is costing us an arm and a leg.

Can the minister please let the hard-working people of Ontario know when we will see the budget? This is not your money, Minister. Tell the people of Ontario where the budget is.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I can assure the member opposite we have taken the necessary steps to ensure that salaries and whatnot are being taken care of. I, too, have shared those concerns with our management and with 2015.

But I also recognize that this is a very complex set of games that are being undertaken. In over 80 years, not once have this is one of the largest. It's two and a half times the size of the Vancouver and Calgary games. We've got over 10,000 athletes and officials visiting. We've got a number of venues that are being prepared right across the Golden Horseshoe, and we make no apologies that we want the region to benefit from the investments that we're making around these games, creating 15,000 new jobs.

It's outstanding, the work that's being done. I congratulate all those who are participating. I welcome the opposition's input as well in terms of what we move, going forward. That's why I've welcomed him to my office on a number of occasions on this issue.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Constituents in my riding are concerned about their local hospital services. Hospitals in my riding cannot plan for the coming year with only words of assurance. The fact is that this government has ignored the needs of smaller hospitals, and the frozen base budgets spelled out in the budget will equal deep service cuts.

This government's new funding scheme is silent on how many smaller hospitals in my riding, like Manitoulin Health Centre, Espanola general hospital, Lady Dunn Health Centre, will be able to keep providing the necessary services.

Instead of empty assurances, does the Acting Premier have a detailed and fully costed plan that he is willing to share with us today?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Yes, it's called a budget, and it takes a number of important steps. The Minister of

Health has laid out an exciting and bold plan to improve health care in northern Ontario. It builds on our record of creating a northern medical school. It builds on our record of increasing health care facilities across northern Ontario. It builds on all of the important initiatives we have taken to shorten wait times for northerners. It builds on the assistance we've provided to northerners. When they need special treatment outside of the north, they have to come down here.

So this government's record of achievement in health care, particularly for the north, is unparalleled. We're proud of it, and we'll continue to build on that solid—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I beg your indulgence. I neglected to do this at the proper time, but I would like to introduce Darwin and Jennifer Groskleg, parents of page Abigail, who is serving here on her last day.

Thanks for joining us today to the Groskleys and thank you for Abigail.

#### USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** On a point of order: I would ask the Speaker just for some clarification. The Speaker seemed to intimate today that discussion in the House on the business of committee was perhaps not appropriate or standard procedure. I would warrant that it is, particularly in this instance, being with the House leader. So I would ask for a ruling on that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** First, let me thank you. It is a point of order. Let me be clear. It is a long-standing practice of the House that matters before committees should be dealt with in the committee. I allowed the question because, in my mind, it had a connection to a matter that the House may be required to consider. If we come to page 506 of the O'Brien and Bosc House of Commons Procedure and Practice for the fuller discussion of this matter, it says in part, as I indicated to the member from Newmarket–Aurora, "When a question has been asked about a committee's proceedings, Speakers have encouraged members to rephrase their questions." In this case, what I said was that the committee House leaders and the committee business is to be inside the committee.

#### VISITOR

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I'd ask the entire House to join me in welcoming my father, Dr. Jagtaran Dhaliwal, who has joined us in the members' gallery today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe–Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Just on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is Holy Thursday. There are a number of us in the House that are of a Christian denomination—a very important holy day, and I would ask that this House not sit after private members' public business this afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is the member asking for unanimous consent?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Yes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we have unanimous consent on this point of order? I hear a no.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, I would ask that the Deputy Premier might consider correcting his own record when he said that the Minister of Health called in the Auditor General. That is not a fact; the Auditor General was not called in—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. You know that's not a point of order. A member has to correct their own record.

#### LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Before we exit and we see too many people leave, I think it's a good practice that we bid farewell to our pages, as this is their last day.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do believe I have another point of order. The member for Cambridge first.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would actually ask that we have some clarification on some of the rulings that you've made with respect to some of the language we've used. I know that in oral questions we've used the word "cover-up." We've used the words "misleading the House." I want to note, personally, that in the federal Parliament yesterday during proceedings in oral questions, those questions inserting the language "cover-up" and "misleading" were permitted by the Speaker in that House, Mr. Speaker.

It's part of the opposition's duty to hold the government to account. I believe that it would be in order for us to ask questions, trying to get to the bottom of some of the questions that we're seeing on that side of the House. At the federal Parliament yesterday, Mr. Speaker, they were talking about the F-35 fighter jet procurement program with respect to the Auditor General. I ask that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Not necessarily to interrupt the member, but I made out clearly what his point was, and the short answer to that is there is actually no list that exists. It is the will of the House and the Speaker in terms of interpreting the intent of the question or the comment being made. Quite frankly, it has been traditionally done by the Speaker to set the tone of the House.

I want to hear one more point of order, from the member from Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, we're saying goodbye to the pages. I know they would love to be here an extra week, so I'd ask unanimous consent that we sit next week.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As we continue to move down in my ruling of this particular point of order, my knee has given out twice so far; I just wanted to let you know that. We have had a request for unanimous consent to sit next week. Agreed? I heard a no.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** With respect, to go back to my original point of order, I recognize your response. However, in this particular case, the public accounts committee has directed a motion towards the House that sits with the House leaders—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would let the member know that I've made a ruling on that point of order.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** If I could speak to the point of order raised by my colleague from Cambridge, I understand the convention in this House—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I've ruled on that already.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me, on both sides. I've already ruled on that request. Thank you very much.

This House stands adjourned until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** The Liberal government has announced that they are having a fire sale of Ontario Northland. I believe that this is a blatant attempt to keep North Bay and Timmins out of the Ring of Fire. It is my job as MPP to do everything in my power to see that North Bay and the northeastern corridor, up through Timmins and beyond, join in the Ring of Fire, the biggest mining find in this century. The Ring of Fire is out there for grabs and we need to be focused on developing jobs and opportunities.

In addition, I have already submitted two order paper questions to the government asking how they plan to fund Ontario Northland pensioners without any further employee contributions or matching government contributions after the sell-off. I have discovered that any sale of Ontario Northland will cost the government \$150 million just for the unfunded liability in the Ontario Northland pension.

The Liberals show a saving of \$100 million in the budget, but nowhere does the budget show them paying out the \$150 million to protect the pensioners. So I say, the north's communities need answers. I think what the Liberal government has done to North Bay is awful. I think it was cowardly not to announce it in North Bay, and I think it was politically motivated.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** In January of this year it was reported that 59,000 children, women and men in Hamilton relied on the Ontario disability support program or Ontario Works. A single individual on Ontario Works receives \$599 a month. That doesn't even cover the most basic necessities for food and shelter. Some 18,432 Hamiltonians turn to a food bank each month; 8,526 of them are children under the age of 18.

I commend the people at Hamilton Food Share and the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction for their work to help Hamiltonians deal with the circumstances that they're facing under these startling statistics. I thank them for speaking out and bringing these figures to the attention of the broader public.

In a news release issued earlier this week, Joanne Santucci, the executive director of Hamilton Food Share, said, "Many emergency food programs across the city have been reporting a significant increase in need—particularly for infant baby formula."

Tom Cooper, director of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, said, "The Ontario budget will deepen the crises facing many hungry children and adults in Hamilton."

We need a balanced approach to balancing the budget. If belts need to be tightened, let's understand that some are already at the last notch and can't go any tighter.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Over the last few years, the global recession and the needed focus of employment and economic growth have taken our focus off of a critical problem that will define the legacy that we leave for our children and grandchildren. That critical problem is climate change. The changes to our environment will pervade every aspect of our children's and grandchildren's lives and will spare no country, province, city or family.

Scientists are virtually unanimous in their belief that climate change is mainly man-made and is principally caused by the burning of fossil fuels. The IPCC calculates that in order to avoid a dangerous change to our environment as we know it, we need to reduce the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million. CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is now at 393 parts per million, and by the time we close all our coal-fired plants in 2014, the CO<sub>2</sub> concentration will be 400 parts per million. The increase each year accelerates.

Canada's record is one of the worst, and only action by the provinces, especially BC, Quebec, and Ontario, has helped to offset the Harper government's complete lack of action. Canada's greenhouse gas production continues to increase.

Mr. Speaker, we are approaching the point where changes will not be reversible and will be catastrophic. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to act. The stakes could not be higher and the need for urgent action could not be clearer. Ontarians have made great strides

by reducing the burning of coal and thereby reducing greenhouse gases by 26 million tonnes per year. In 2014, we will be the first government to stop using coal.

I urge all members to support green energy and conservation as we in Ontario lead by example.

### MILTON QUARRY

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Milton quarry operated by Dufferin Aggregates, a division of Holcim. As the largest working aggregate quarry in Canada, Milton quarry has been an important part of the Halton community and economy since it began its operations in 1962.

As a leading supplier of aggregate for the construction industry in the greater Toronto area and other adjacent municipalities, Milton quarry has contributed to the success of some of the largest construction projects in Canadian history, including Highway 407 and Pearson International Airport.

Having had the opportunity to visit the site and learn about how it operated, I can attest to the quality of work undertaken by the quarry and its employees. Having planted trees at the site at the annual tree-planting events, I can also attest and tell you how proud I am of the company and their commitment to rehabilitating the site. They have been a leader in the industry for quarry rehabilitation and water management. Ongoing rehabilitation plans at Milton quarry will eventually see the site evolve into a community park and wildlife sanctuary for all residents to enjoy.

The Milton quarry has also supported the health care of local residents through contributions to the Milton hospital, which for years has been in need of expansion, and today the planning for that expansion is taking place. The Milton quarry has also been a supporter and partner of local community and environmental organizations, including the Bruce Trail and Scouts Canada.

In recognition of its environmental and community commitments, the Milton quarry has won over 50 industry and community awards for property enhancement, progressive rehabilitation and community relations.

Congratulations on their 50th anniversary.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On Friday, March 23, another black Friday for the people of northeastern Ontario, the Liberal government announced the intended sale of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission and the death of the Northlander passenger train.

The government uses all the right words, big words like “divestiture,” and promises of an enhanced service, but northerners no longer believe the government’s line, since they also promised not to privatize the ONTC.

The official opposition predictably derides the government’s plan to kill the ONR. They spread the word that the answer to all the north’s problems is to elect them.

But they wanted to kill the ONTC in the first place. Has the leopard changed its spots? Well, on April 2, when asked if a Tory government would cancel the ONTC decision, the member from Nipissing said that the sale would be too far gone for the Tories to reverse it and it’s not a given that new owners will downsize operations.

Thousands of people have expressed their shock with this decision. How will seniors and others travel to medical appointments in Toronto without a passenger train—10 hours on the night bus? What about students? What happens when even bus service to small towns in the north is also cancelled? What about the 1,000 jobs? What about the pensions of the people who built Ontario’s development road?

Speaker, the people of the north extracted the natural resources that built this province, and we are doing so again. We have every right to demand equitable service and honest answers.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Like the rest of the world, Ontario has faced some challenges in recent years. We’ve overcome a sluggish US economy and uncertainty in Europe, and now we’re seeing some positive signs of economic growth in our province—we heard this morning about the wonderful job creation we’ve had.

Our government continues to make thoughtful choices to build on this kind of growth.

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With Ontario’s economy gaining momentum, we are taking strong action with our plan to balance the budget by 2017-18.

I believe we’re making the right choices for Ontario families. Our plan will make sure all of Ontario’s students are able to reach their full potential. And we’re choosing to protect health care by asking seniors with the highest incomes to pay more for their prescription drug costs, so Ontario can invest in supports for all seniors.

I am proud of the choices we are making to create jobs and protect vital services, but I am disappointed that the Conservatives are playing politics instead of working with us to build a stronger economy. In fact, they vowed to vote against our budget without even taking the time to read it and without making the effort to strengthen it.

With Ontario on the path to recovery, the PCs would cut recklessly and take us off track. But our government has a plan to keep the economic recovery on track by taking strong action to balance the budget and create jobs for Ontario families.

### HIGHWAY 7/8

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Many of my constituents have concerns about the government’s plans for Highway 7/8. It matters especially to those who live along the route between New Hamburg and Stratford. Here are just a few of the issues that matter to them: heritage preservation, safety considerations, the environment, regional



traffic flow, movement of agricultural equipment, the impact on residents and businesses in Shakespeare, and fair consideration of property values, among many more concerns. These issues matter to them, and they matter to me.

In December, I requested a comprehensive briefing by Ministry of Transportation officials on the plan for Highway 7/8. In January, a briefing took place. I expressed many of the views and concerns I've heard from my constituents.

In February, I met with ABC, the Agricultural Businesses Communities group. In March, I attended Perth county council's joint meeting with the councils of Perth East and Perth South. I listened as councillors spoke up with tough questions for ministry staff and AECOM staff.

Here's what I'm asking the Minister of Transportation: He needs to listen carefully to my constituents' views. The minister needs to do his homework. He needs to show he's listening, and he needs to show us that our concerns are being addressed.

### QUEST FOR GOLD PROGRAM

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I want to thank and recognize several of my constituents who were awarded funding under the Quest for Gold Ontario assistance program. The 2012 Quest for Gold recipients from the riding of Scarborough Southwest were nine. One is present today. His name is Daniel Alvarenga, who is here with his cousin Luis and his mother. I want to thank them for coming here today.

I also want to mention the other recipients: Amy Armstrong, Abdi Dini, Crispin Duenas, Marlon Laidlaw-Allen, Leanna MacLean, Reed May, Kyle Smith and Justin B. Spencer.

These nine athletes were awarded over \$41,000 from the government of Ontario, because they have demonstrated at provincial, national and international sporting events that they're among the best athletes in Ontario.

The Quest for Gold program was established in January 2006 to provide financial support to athletes from Ontario so they can continue their pursuit of athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition. Some specific objects of the Quest for Gold program are (1) to courage athletes to stay in Ontario to live and train; (2) to compensate athletes for earnings lost while training; (3) to increase access to high-performance coaching; and (4) to enable athletes to successfully pursue excellence in sport while fulfilling their educational goals.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating all these remarkable athletes as we continue to support them and all amateur athletes who inspire Ontarians to engage in physical activity and sport.

### PRESCOTT AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm proud to rise today to salute the people and businesses honoured last week at the annual

Prescott and District Chamber of Commerce awards banquet.

Among the honourees was the Spencerville and District Optimists, whose incredibly dedicated membership was recognized with the Rev. Gerry Ring Memorial Community Service Award for two decades of tireless work for youth. The award was accepted by club founder and former township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal fire chief Jim Purcell. He's one of eight charter members who remain among the club's 27 members.

Generations of young people growing up in the Spencerville area owe some of their greatest memories to the countless events and activities either organized or supported by the Optimist Club.

Award winners that night included South Grenville District High School student Tamara Amell, who took home the prestigious Connie Dickey Memorial Youth Award. The Dragon Garden restaurant received the Mike Boyles Memorial Corporate Service Award, and Ian Farthing, the dynamic artistic director of the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival, was named Community Artistic and Cultural Contribution Award winner—very fitting, given that this year marks the festival's 10th anniversary.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the awards ceremony, but, reading from newspaper coverage, I was moved by how humbled and appreciative the winners were to be recognized for their efforts to make life a little better around them. It's important that we take a moment and thank them.

I want to commend the Prescott chamber and its executive, including president Dan Roddick, for another outstanding celebration of business excellence and community achievement.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. Fedeli assumes ballot item number 28 and Mr. Nicholls assumes ballot item number 51.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AFFAIRES AUTOCHTONES

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I am very pleased to be able to rise today to tell the House and tell the people of Ontario that next week I will have the honour of welcoming to Ontario the members of the aboriginal affairs working group. This group includes Premiers and Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs from each of the provinces and territories. I just want to acknowledge that

it was our current Minister of Economic Development and Innovation who initiated the creation of this group, and this is the fourth year in which it will be meeting.

It also includes the participation and support of the leaders of the five national aboriginal organizations: the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Métis National Council, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, and the Native Women's Association of Canada.

L'Ontario présidera la semaine prochaine ce groupe pour la quatrième fois, la toute première fois pour moi. J'attends avec impatience le début des débats.

I'm very much looking forward to this meeting next week.

In the 2012 speech from the throne, our government committed to "continue to work hard to close the socio-economic gap between aboriginal people and non-aboriginal Ontarians." The work of the aboriginal affairs working group represents a concrete step toward closing this gap. For the past three years, the working group has provided national leadership as it works collaboratively on issues that are critical to improving conditions for First Nation, Inuit and Métis people.

The group's priorities include increasing graduation rates for aboriginal students, supporting economic development in aboriginal communities, and taking action to end violence against aboriginal women and girls. This is not something that we can accomplish by going off in separate directions across the country. Success requires all of us working together. La réussite exige que nous conjuguions nos efforts.

And we need a strong and committed federal partner. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to emphasize that. That's why I'm urging the federal government to join our working group and to contribute to these very important discussions.

Take, for example, one of the most troubling issues: the rate of violence against aboriginal women and girls. Across Canada, the rate of violence against aboriginal women is triple that of non-aboriginal women. Aboriginal women make up only 3% of the female population, and yet murdered aboriginal women represent 10% of female homicides in Canada.

Ici, en Ontario, notre gouvernement collabore avec les communautés autochtones sur plusieurs initiatives pour aider les victimes de la violence et pour prévenir toute forme de violence.

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We recognize that we need to work and look at the root causes that affect the safety and well-being of women and girls in the aboriginal community. That's why our government established the joint working group on violence against aboriginal women, which provides a forum for Ontario ministries and aboriginal partners to work together to effectively address violence against aboriginal women. We're teaching children and young men that violence is not acceptable, and we're providing justice and victim support services that help individuals and communities heal. But it's clear that we have to look

at this very serious issue holistically, together with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, addressing the pressing issues faced by aboriginal people is an economic and a social imperative. Our well-being is interconnected. To build a stronger Ontario and stronger Canada, we must build stronger aboriginal communities, working with aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal communities represent the province's fastest-growing potential workforce. It's estimated that by 2036, a quarter of all workers in northern Ontario will be aboriginal. That's why we're working hard to increase the participation of First Nations and Métis communities in areas such as mining, forestry and green energy. Our government has created a number of initiatives to help aboriginal communities prosper and benefit from economic opportunities. The northern training partnership fund provides skills training to help aboriginal and non-aboriginal northern Ontarians participate in and benefit from emerging economic development opportunities like the Ring of Fire. Through the new relationship fund, we provide increased economic development and skills training opportunities to help aboriginal communities work and partner with business and government. And to support Métis economic development, we're providing up to \$30 million over 10 years through the Métis Voyageur development fund. These initiatives will provide First Nation and Métis communities with the support they need to benefit from Ontario's economic developments.

Monsieur le Président, les jeunes autochtones constituent le segment qui croît le plus rapidement dans notre pays et, par conséquent, représentent une partie importante de l'avenir de l'Ontario.

The aboriginal youth in this country and in this province represent one of the fastest-growing parts of the population, and so they are a key part to the future of the province. And yet, in Ontario, aboriginal people are three times less likely than non-aboriginal Ontarians to obtain a university degree. Across Canada, the high school dropout rate for aboriginal youth is 2.5 times the rate of non-aboriginal youth. And to me and to our government, and I think to everyone in this House, what's most troubling is that that gap is widening. We know how important an education is. Our government has made it a priority to ensure that all children in Ontario, including aboriginal children, have the best possible educational opportunities available to them. I will be the first to admit, as a former Minister of Education and now as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, that that work is not done. We know that there is much that has to be done, and I want to reinforce our government's commitment to aboriginal students in our provincial education system.

J'aimerais réaffirmer l'engagement de notre gouvernement vis-à-vis des apprenants autochtones dans notre système provincial d'éducation.

Our aboriginal education strategy has been designed to help improve opportunities for off-reserve First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, whether they live in remote areas or urban areas. So, with the launch of that strategy,



the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit education policy framework, we have made system-wide change to address the needs of aboriginal learners in the province, in our provincial schools, and we'll continue to work to increase all Ontario students' knowledge and awareness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, history and perspectives. I think that is a frontier for us as government, to make sure that not just aboriginal students but all students have a better sense of the history of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures. I believe that the keys to the success of these initiatives lie in the development of good, collaborative relationships and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Nous devons collaborer plus étroitement, à savoir les gouvernements, les formateurs et les partenaires autochtones, pour améliorer le milieu éducatif.

We're very proud of the record that we have, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to education in Ontario, but the reality is that only the federal government can resolve the disparity in funding between education on First Nation reserves and education delivered in the rest of the province.

In the most recent speech from the throne, our government continued to call on the federal government to work with First Nations, other aboriginal partners and the province to improve education outcomes for aboriginal students. I just want to reinforce that we need that partnership. We're calling on the federal government to partner with us and First Nations people. Since 2009 and to this day, the working group has repeatedly called upon the Prime Minister to convene a First Ministers' meeting on aboriginal education with national aboriginal leaders.

Le gouvernement fédéral doit devenir un partenaire plus engagé avec les communautés autochtones en ce qui concerne l'éducation sur les réserves.

Without that federal partnership, it's very difficult for the country to move forward on this issue of education for aboriginal students. This includes providing adequate funding.

Although—and everyone in this House, I think, will know—the federal government did provide additional funds for First Nation education in their budget last week, this is merely a small first step in improving on-reserve education for aboriginal children across Ontario and Canada.

Let me just put it in context. The need for operating and capital dollars that was announced in their budget—by our estimates, in Ontario alone the need is in the order of \$200 million per year to close the on-reserve/off-reserve gap in funding. The federal budget announced only \$275 million over three years for the entire country. So the disparity there demonstrates that the funding gap still exists between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students. First Nation children will still receive thousands of dollars less per student each year from the federal government than the provinces provide to non-aboriginal students.

The cuts to the overall budget of the federal department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada make it a bit hard to believe that the federal

government is serious about improving the quality of life for aboriginal communities across the country.

To my mind, getting the funding for aboriginal students right, getting education right, will allow everything else to fall into place. It is a critical cornerstone. Ottawa must correct the funding imbalances so First Nations students receive the same funding as other children.

Ottawa doit corriger les déséquilibres en matière de financement pour permettre aux élèves et étudiants des Premières Nations de recevoir le même financement.

It must also address the state of on-reserve school infrastructure in a systematic way. Next week, when working group members arrive in Toronto, it will be exactly five years to the day since the federal government promised the community of Pikangikum a permanent school. I'm going to use this community as an example because it's one that has been fairly high-profile.

I recently visited Pikangikum, Mr. Speaker, and I asked to visit their school. There is no permanent school. In fact, there's no school in sight. The community's small cluster of portables showcases the urgent need for Canada to take its on-reserve responsibilities more seriously.

Now we've learned that even with this makeshift school, which is more like a cluster of portables, the year for elementary students is in jeopardy. The state of the mould in the teacherages, which are the buildings that the teachers live in, has made it unsafe for many of the teachers to remain in the community. The federal government must take action to ensure that no First Nation children in Canada have to experience losing a school year as the children in Pikangikum may have to.

At the time when I was in Pikangikum, I spoke with the principal of the school. She noted that next year, even with the facility that they have, there's a whole class of junior kindergarten students that would not have a place in the school, that would not have an opportunity to come to the school just because of the physical inadequacy.

Mr. Speaker, like the students in Pikangikum First Nation, the aboriginal affairs working group is tired of waiting. It's time the federal government stepped up and eliminated the funding gap. Half-hearted attempts at addressing the education outcomes on First Nation reserves are not enough. We know the answer, and that answer is to address the disparity in funding for First Nation education.

L'Ontario et le groupe de travail sont prêts, disponibles et capables de travailler avec eux.

We are willing, we are waiting, we are there to be partners in working on this incredibly important issue. We know what needs to be done to improve education for First Nation students, and we need everyone at the table to make it happen.

I've been very clear that I understand full well that the provincial government, First Nations and the federal government all need to be at the table in order to bring the resources, the knowledge and the capacity that are necessary to resolve this issue.

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Again, I look forward to welcoming my counterparts from the provinces and territories and the leaders of the

five national aboriginal organizations. I look forward to a productive meeting next week, and I look forward to progress for a better future for aboriginal people and, therefore, for all Canadians.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Merci. Meegwetich.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Responses?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Mr. Speaker, I'm going to begin with a quote from Chief Dean Sayers: "Ontario continues to shoulder the responsibility to the federal government and this is simply unacceptable."

The aboriginal affairs working group is focused on delivering results in key areas, including education, economic development, and violence against aboriginal women and girls. The aboriginal affairs working group has adopted a collaborative approach to setting targets in (1) graduation rates for education; (2) closing the income gap between natives and non-natives in regard to economic development; and (3) ending violence against women and children.

The objective of the aboriginal affairs working group is to work effectively with the federal government to improve outcomes for aboriginal peoples.

Today's statement by the minister gives a warm and fuzzy feeling but fails to document measurable targets or benchmarks in any of the key areas. Where is the increase in graduation rates? How much has the income gap closed between natives and non-natives? Where are the statistics to show that violence against women and children is decreasing? Where is the provincial commitment to play its part in training and retraining teachers?

The federal government has the ability to move forward with the announcement regarding education buildings, but one of the commitments in the past was to have teachers, and retain teachers, from the aboriginal communities.

Why does the government continue to be reactive instead of proactive when it comes to economic development and social programs for First Nations? Why do they not work more closely and take into effect existing priorities or assets?

Where is the plan to combat drug abuse? In November 2009, Nishnawbe Aski Nation declared a prescription drug abuse state of emergency as a result of the epidemic in their communities. With the recent removal of OxyContin from the drug supply, this issue is set to escalate.

Mr. Speaker, I must go on about that. I'll explain this to the individuals here. OxyContin is a time-release pill. What takes place is, these individuals are looking for this high, so they crush the pill and consume it all at once, getting that rush all at once. Here's something, Minister, you're probably not aware of: The new replacement drug has now been broken down and can be used in the same fashion. Where is the plan for the government to combat prescription drug abuse?

The government claims to be taking a collaborative approach to dealing with First Nations. Here's a quote from Nishnawbe Aski Nation's website with respect to

Bill 191, the Far North Act: "The Far North Act is viewed by First Nations in NAN as an invalid law and a new form of colonialism."

Here's a quote from the Nishnawbe Aski Nation website with respect to the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act: "NAN has taken the opportunity to measure the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act against international human rights instruments and has found many human rights violations. The act was an opportunity for the province of Ontario to recognize First Nation forestry development rights and guarantee equitable sharing of the economic benefits. Instead, First Nations continue to be marginalized in the forestry sector, not only by private companies, but now also by" local forest management corporations "which will be controlled by the province of Ontario."

Does this sound like a collaborative approach to working with First Nations?

Are First Nations communities better off now than they were eight years ago? Indian and Northern Affairs Canada have developed a community well-being index to measure the quality of life in First Nation communities based on four indicators, including education, labour force, income and housing. The CWB scores and trends show, not surprisingly, that the quality of life in First Nation communities is not keeping pace and that there has been little or no progress.

Are First Nation housing conditions any better? I think not. Do First Nation communities have better drinking water infrastructure? Do First Nations communities have access to better education or health care? Most importantly, do First Nations kids have hope and opportunities for the future?

It's great to hear notions about collaboration and relationships, but let's see some results. The federal government promised new investments of \$100 million over three years to pay for literacy programs as well as other supports and services for aboriginal schools and students. In addition, Ottawa has promised \$175 million over three years to help build and renovate schools and reserves, as well as a federal government commitment for \$330.8 million for replacing and fixing water infrastructure on reserves.

I'll close as I started. Chief Dean Sayers commented: "Ontario continues to shoulder the responsibility to the federal government and this is simply unacceptable."

Never mind waiting, just do what's right. Meegwetich.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Kenora-Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I would like to thank the minister for taking the time to keep this House up to date on the work being done by the aboriginal affairs working group.

Next week, as the minister pointed out, the group is meeting in Toronto, but I respectfully suggest that the minister talk to the committee and ask them—encourage them—to go up to Pikangikum, to meet there, because I truly believe that seeing is part of understanding. I know that the minister is very passionate about what's happening in Pikangikum.



The group has a mandate to help increase graduation rates among First Nations youth, supporting economic development in First Nations communities and ending the violence against aboriginal women and girls, as the minister pointed out.

Since being elected, I've had a number of opportunities to work with the minister and her staff and, again, I firmly believe that the minister is sincere in her desire to work with First Nations to improve their quality of life.

The minister spoke of the conditions in Pikangikum, but I wanted to point out that the conditions of the school there are not unique to Pikangikum. I'd like to take a moment, if I could, to read a letter from Mr. Ryan Boggs, who is a teacher from Fort Severn First Nation. Mr. Boggs writes, "The students in my current class have been going to school in portables for as long as they can remember. Their 'school' consists of cold buildings (it has gotten as low as minus 50), constant plumbing problems, no gym and few, if any, resources for their instruction."

He continues: "I do not find it surprising that many students barely complete grade school: hopelessness pervades. Hopelessness in a child is disastrous. These children deserve a new school, one that will encourage them to be excited about their education and their future. If they don't, I fear another generation will be lost to gangs and abuse."

I'd like to take this opportunity to give voice to that generation and share some of the comments from the students at that school in Fort Severn—the elementary school at Wasaho.

Tyler writes, "The kids sit around and eat junk food and watch TV or sit on the computer instead of exercising. This makes me alone and depressed."

Andrea writes, "We have no proper school and no gym. Our first school got shut down due to mould. I was only in grade 1 at the time." She's now in grade 8. She writes, "The students of Wasaho First Nation School had to get their education all over the town, such as at the youth centre, Niska Café and the E-Centre. Other families went out of the reserve to give their child a proper education."

Savannah writes, "In Fort Severn the kids here are almost always bored. We go to school in portables and we have no gym. Kids here sniff gas, glue, nail polish and hair spray instead of exercising. This makes me feel dead and alone."

**Interjection:** Terrible.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Sorry, I'm getting emotional. It's terrible.

These are some of the voices of the students at Wasaho school. I would ask a page to deliver these. It's really unfortunate that we have this in Ontario.

These students cannot wait for First Nations education to be funded equally. Even Don Drummond, the consultant charged with cutting the province's spending, stated very bluntly that the province needs to step up and provide funding for First Nations students if the federal government won't.

A few months ago, the national media was abuzz with talk of Attawapiskat's housing crisis. There are dozens of Attawapiskats across my riding and across Ontario. These communities are desperate, where the communities' infrastructure has been underfunded and left to rot by a federal government unwilling to step up and fulfil its duties and a provincial government that keeps telling us that this is a federal issue.

Minister, children are in desperation, and they don't care about federal or provincial jurisdictions. We have an obligation, not as politicians but as human beings, to step up and work together, to bring hope back to Fort Severn and communities all over Ontario.

**1340**

We have to step up and we have to do the right thing. We can't fight about who ends up footing the bill. We can fight about that later. We have an obligation to Andrea, Tyler, Morley, Rachel, Jade, Rebecca, Savannah, Matilda, Jay, River, Laurinda, Samantha and the countless thousands of students across this province.

We have an obligation to put partisanship and jurisdictional boundaries aside and provide them with a reason to get up in the morning and with a future. We have an obligation to Samuel, who puts it very simply and very eloquently: "We need your help to make a better life."

## PETITIONS

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I was listening to the speech from the member from the NDP—very good.

My petition is from the riding of Durham, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment"—who's here today—"to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt" and other sensitive areas in

the province of Ontario; more importantly, in my riding of Durham.

I'm pleased to sign and support it and present it to Nicholas on his last day here at Queen's Park—a sad day.

### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'ai une pétition qui nous parvient d'un peu partout à travers l'Ontario :

« Attendu que la mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive en français des services de qualité du gouvernement de l'Ontario et de surveiller l'application de la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes selon la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que contrairement au vérificateur général, à l'ombudsman, au commissaire à l'environnement et au commissaire à l'intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l'Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français; »

Ils demandent « à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu'il relève directement de l'Assemblée législative. »

J'appuie cette pétition, monsieur le Président. Je vais la signer et demander au page Ammaar de l'amener au greffier.

### IMMIGRATION POLICY POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities."

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I certainly support this petition, will sign it and send it to you via page Julia.

### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by a great many people, not only from my riding but from across the province of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

"Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities."

I thank you very much for the opportunity to present this petition on their behalf.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Sorry, Paul. I stood up once before, before you got here.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I was up first, thank you, Mr. Qadri.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** This is on behalf of residents in northeastern Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;



"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets at Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately."

I wholeheartedly agree, affix my signature and give to it page Preston.

## IMMIGRATION POLICY

### POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Etobicoke–North.

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Thank you, Speaker. I am willing to yield my spot to the member of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. He does seem quite anxious. Am I able to do that, sir?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I've already recognized you. Proceed.

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Thank you, sir. I will follow that.

Speaker, I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which is entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities."

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I certainly support this petition, Speaker, and send it to you via page Hassan.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt."

I've affixed my signature and give this to page Liam.

1350

## HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I would like to comment on the generosity of the member from Etobicoke North; I'm sure he had my well-being in his heart.

Speaker, this is day four in a row—I'm now having thousands a day—this is 3,776 more petitions signed.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I agree with this, Speaker, and will gladly sign my name to it.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** “To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas the current enrolment of Avalon Public School is 687 students;

“Whereas the student capacity of the school is 495 students, as determined by the Ministry of Education’s own occupancy formula;

“Whereas the issue of overcrowding and lack of space makes it impossible for Avalon Public School to offer full-day kindergarten until the overcrowding issue is addressed;

“Whereas Avalon Public School is located in a high-growth community;

“Whereas the enrolment at Avalon Public School is expected to continue rising at a rate of 10% to 15% a year for the foreseeable future;

“Whereas the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has made funding a new school in Avalon a top capital priority;

“We, the undersigned, call on the province of Ontario and Ministry of Education to provide the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board with the necessary funding to build an additional school in Avalon, to open no later than September 2014.”

I agree with this petition, and I send it forward with Abbigail. Thank you.

## GREENBELT

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m pleased to present another petition from my riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Greenbelt Act was passed by the Ontario Legislature in 2005, affecting property rights in Ontario; and

“Whereas the right to own, use, enjoy and the opportunity to earn a living from private property is the basis of freedom and democracy; and

“Whereas the greenbelt restricts property owners in the use, enjoyment and ability to earn a living from their private property; and

“Whereas property owners are not being compensated for any loss of these rights;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the greenbelt plan area”—and the Oak Ridges moraine act—“at the 10-year re-evaluation in 2015 to allow additional development when requested by the community and supported by the local municipality.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to Preston, one of the pages who is working his last afternoon here at Queen’s Park. Thank you, Preston.

## HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** You will have heard this before; thousands and thousands have signed it.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

“Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario’s horse racing and breeding industry;

“Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

“Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

“Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program.”

I couldn’t agree more with this, Mr. Speaker. I’m going to sign it, and I’m going to give it to Hassan on his last day to be delivered.

## IMMIGRATION POLICY

## POLITIQUES D’IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, entitled “Respect for Diverse Communities.”

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

“Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

“We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

“That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

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“Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;



"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I certainly support this petition, Speaker, will sign it and send it to you via page Preston.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### CONDOMINIUM DISPUTE RESOLUTION

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Ministry of Consumer Services explore the possibility of alternative forms of dispute resolution in matters between condominium boards and owners.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'm proud to rise today in the Legislature to present this motion before the House. This motion is one that reaches out to Ontarians across the entire province. Fourteen years ago, the Condominium Act was brought into power in the province, and it was an appropriate act for the time. It addressed many of the issues which surrounded owning a condo unit in Ontario.

However, times have changed. The number of condominiums in this province has increased dramatically in the intervening time. In 2012, Ontario has become a far more urbanized and more densely populated province. More and more of us are living in large urban centres, with space becoming a premium. The result has been a dramatic rise in the number of condominiums popping up around the province.

Mr. Speaker, I've met with representatives from the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario, the Canadian Condominium Institute and, of course, condo boards and condo residents. They have enlightened me with some fascinating statistics. Over the last 25 years, condos have grown from a rarity to almost a commonplace in the province. In the last 25 years, condominiums have become almost 62% of all new home sales in the GTA.

Take my riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville, for instance: There are 23,000 condominium units and some 120 towers currently standing in my riding. This is just the beginning, because, according to the city of Mississauga, the downtown core of Mississauga today has a population of 30,000; by 2031, we expect that to double to 61,000—all of the growth coming from condominiums.

Across the province as a whole, there are more than 500,000 units with over 1.3 million Ontarians living in condos, with a further 34,000 under construction. In fact,

condominiums are so commonplace in this province, Mr. Speaker, that I was surprised to learn that 104 out of the 107 ridings have condominiums of some form or another. Once again, 104 out of the 107 ridings in Ontario have condominiums.

1400

I'm not here to recite statistics to the Legislature, but rather to reinforce to the members present the importance of this motion. With so many individuals and families living in condominiums, we must work to address a major issue which affects all of us. That issue is, of course, dispute resolution. Any Friday in my office, I can guarantee you there's at least one or two condominium owners coming to me because they have some problem or the other with their condo boards. I'm sure many of you have had the same experience. If you have, then you can understand that some condo owners and their boards do not always see eye to eye, and this is what my motion wishes to address.

The Condominium Act of 1998 has provisions in it for dispute resolution. Sections 132, 134 and 135 address this matter in so only it provides the parties involved the avenue of mediation to pursue. Furthermore, should a resolution not be found through mediation, then the matter is sent to arbitration.

This process as it was written is open to both condo owners as well as condo boards. Both sides have equal opportunities to bring forward disputes over declarations, the bylaws, or agreements made between owner and board. This portion of the act was welcomed as a solution to what was viewed as a vacuum at that time with regard to dispute resolution. While it's better than nothing, it does not keep up with today's world, and this is what my motion today seeks to address.

The problem with the current dispute resolution process today is quite simply that it is the only dispute resolution process between condo owners and boards. What may have been okay in 1998 is not in keeping with the realities of 2012.

Let me put this into perspective. Disputes can range from wanting to put a barbecue on one's balcony or a satellite dish on the side of your unit to a timely disclosure of a condo board's budget to allegations that perhaps the condo board did not go through a proper RFP process and awarded the window retrofitting to the brother-in-law of the president of the board. Disputes of all shapes and sizes, however, must proceed through the mediation and arbitration process. The end result is a time-consuming and costly process for all sides involved.

The current form of dispute resolution can involve months, even years, to come to a conclusion. This as well does not take into account the fiscal cost to both sides. To properly prepare yourself to enter into the mediation process, one has to obtain a lawyer's services, and as we all know, lawyers do not come cheap. Both parties' involvement results in spending upwards of \$10,000 on legal costs to properly present their arguments to the mediator. If that does not work, they will have to continue paying costly expenses at the arbitration process.

As I mentioned, the costs associated with the current resolution process can make for a very unfair and one-sided process. On the one side, you can have condo owners against their boards, and some boards literally have multi-million dollar budgets. Many Ontarians are unable to bring together the funds necessary to put together a cogent legal argument and therefore are unable to pursue the current resolution process. On the flip side, sometimes condo boards are required to spend unnecessary funds on legal costs to defend themselves against frivolous dispute claims brought on by overzealous condo owners. The result of the current dispute resolution process is really a one-size-fits-all policy which does not fit all needs of condo owners and boards.

This motion now speaks to the need to broaden the dispute resolution process of the Condominium Act. Do we really need a system where the process, whether you want to fight the board on where to put your satellite dish or there are accusations of irregularities in the way finances have been handled—we cannot have the same dispute resolution process for such widely differing issues. A better solution is needed, and that is what this motion seeks to do. It seeks to instruct the Ministry of Consumer Services to investigate alternative options to the current dispute resolution process.

I believe that this motion provides the ministry and the minister with the mandate to explore a variety of possibilities, especially to compare other jurisdictions to see what other provinces have done on this matter. Right here in Canada, for instance, Nova Scotia has now created a condominium dispute officer who is able to make decisions between parties on a very precise list of criteria. In British Columbia, they're looking to provide resources in education to parties prior to engaging them in the dispute resolution process so that they will know if they have a case prior to proceeding. We should examine these examples to see if there is a possible application here in Ontario.

After speaking with the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario and the Canadian Condominium Institute, I have been informed that this is an issue that not only affects condominium owners and boards in Ontario, but it's an issue that is across the country, and we all need to work together to find a solution. The Condominium Act of 1998 provided a dispute resolution process which was right for the time and the place; however, 14 years later, times have changed. Our province is a very different place now. More and more Ontarians are living in condominiums.

My own riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville is an example of that. Driving through it, I'm often amazed at the level of condo development which is present in my riding. It seems that every other day a new tower appears in my riding, and I know that's the case in small towns and big towns across Ontario and, for that matter, across Canada.

In speaking with my constituents, I often hear their frustrations with trying to resolve basic issues with their condominiums, simple disputes which they're faced with

high costs and large time demands to see resolved. It really frustrates me as their MPP to see a condominium owner come with some dispute, at his wits' end, with nothing but a court solution in front of him. Typically, these people have 9-to-5 jobs. They do not have the ability to take on a board, particularly an entrenched board. We need a better system.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that in this House there are other members, including the member from Trinity—Spadina, working on the same issue. I look forward to working with all of you to come up with a solution that vexes so many people in Ontario to try to make Ontario a better place.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** That's Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to address motion number 15 from the honourable member from Mississauga East—Cooksville.

This week, I had the opportunity to meet with members of both the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario and the Canadian Condominium Institute. These meetings help drive home just how complex the condominium industry is and how delicate the balance is that we need to strike in legislation regulating the condo phenomenon.

Property, its ownership and the right to enjoy it may not be written in any human rights code, but no one will deny the importance of ensuring that owners want to be true owners and not just tenants with a mortgage.

On the other side, unlike a house, when one buys a condo, one buys a community within a community and needs clear rules and tools to enforce it, and of course, compromise on issues that wouldn't arise in other types of properties.

I support the need to look at the dispute resolution mechanism, but I also want to highlight the need to reopen the entire bill and update it to reflect the explosion in condominium construction, where one in 10 Ontarians will soon be living in a condominium. Over the next few years, tens of thousands of new units will come on to the market, and we need to make sure the legislation evolves with them to ensure that the laws and regulations serve the best interests of Ontario. There is a need to review the act with the stakeholders to ensure that current issues facing the industry are addressed.

Mr. Speaker, the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario and the Canadian Condominium Institute have done important work already that addresses the needs, and I urge the minister to use this report to bring the Condominium Act up to date. It identifies many issues that have developed as this form of housing has evolved into a major sector in the housing market. These recommendations will ensure that the market continues to grow and that the needs of the residents and the owners are looked after.

I look forward to working with the minister and her ministry to ensure that this important legislation is updated.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Trinity–Spadina.

1410

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm happy to hear that the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry wants to open up the act, because I think that's a good thing. I've been trying to do that for four years. There will be an opportunity, on May 10, to hear more of your comments on this.

I do support what the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville is doing. It is a small measure, but it recognizes that we have a problem in the condominium world, and it's a problem that obviously needs to be tackled. I don't think we need to tackle it in small, little pieces, but at least it's an effort that the member has made that moves us along that way, and that's why I will support it. I will speak to it briefly and give some history, as she did early on.

One of the main problems we have around this is that we have had six ministers in the last eight years. There is no good that can come out of that kind of constant changing of the guard. If you've got so many ministers coming and going, there probably will not be any minister who will be strong or brave enough to be able to say it's time to change the condo act. Because after 14 years of an incredible condominium boom, we have seen so many problems, and the time has come.

Every time you have a different minister, they have to come up to speed, and I understand that. They get very nervous in terms of initiating changes, because they're not quite certain of their own position or not quite certain whether they understand the issue very well. It takes time, and I appreciate that. But I want to highlight that as a serious problem: too many ministers over the last eight years, and as a result, nobody has been able to get a serious handle on this particular problem.

The member correctly says that since 1998, we have seen a tremendous boom in the condo world, and we—governments, MPPs—have not kept up to date in terms of the changes that are so drastically required. And it's time. I know that the ministry, with respect to my pushing them, did a little condo survey a year and a half ago and they're doing another one, and it's all good. I'm hoping that after the survey, the government will realize that we need big changes—not minor changes, but dramatic changes.

What the member highlights is a serious problem. But the problems don't exist between condo owners and condo boards alone. The problems go beyond that. The problems are between condo owners and developers and condo owners and property managers, and this motion doesn't touch on that. I understand that maybe there will be other bills that will touch on different aspects. I suspect that is the approach that some other Liberal may want to take on this—I don't know. But I appreciate the fact that the member understands that with a growing community living in condominiums—she has come to terms with the fact that this at least is a problem that has been identified in her riding, and that's a good start.

When a condo owner and a condo board have disputes, it can come to no good in terms of the friction that arises between them, and someone has to pay for those legal costs. If the board wins, the condo owner loses legally, and the cost can be very, very heavy. If the board loses, the condominium owner wins, but the costs are spread to everybody, so all condominium owners lose in that regard. We have to find a better way.

Now, the mediation and arbitration that already exists in the condo law, which most ministers who have spoken to my bill have said is adequate, is simply inadequate, as the member has stated. The problem with mediation and arbitration is that the majority of people don't even know it exists, and they go directly to the courts.

But if you go to arbitration, arbitration is very expensive. Nothing is settled in one hour—nothing. A condo lawyer will charge you at least \$500 just to sit down for that hour, and then you've got to sit down with the other party, it doesn't get solved in another hour either and you're already up to \$1,200 if it costs more than \$500. Understand: Disputes take time, and so they're very costly. Nobody goes to arbitration.

Some people take the mediation route, but I submit that most people simply don't have a clue, and they go directly to the court system.

Nobody goes to court except those few that have the money, and I know of some cases that I brought attention to in this Legislature where one guy is still at it years later and he has spent \$120,000 already defending himself. Another individual I mentioned in this Legislature last year said that he has spent \$40,000 defending himself and it's still not settled.

The problem is, it's very expensive to solve a problem that you have, and it shouldn't be that way. We need to have a process that's quick and cheap.

I remind people that renters can go to a tribunal. They pay a fee of 25 bucks, the landlord pays \$125 or \$150—mind you, they've got a little more pecunia; they can afford the \$150. But the poor individual at least can go and defend himself or herself for 25 bucks. It may be an unfair scenario of a landlord that brings a lawyer and a poor individual that goes there himself or herself, but at least they're able to go to a tribunal for 25 bucks and defend themselves. A condo owner has nowhere to go—they're on their own—unless you're wealthy.

But even wealthy people have realized—and one woman in particular that I've worked with has said to me, “Rosario, I've spent 20,000 bucks. I'm taking your advice and I am stopping here.” What she discovered is that there's tremendous collusion, often, between a lawyer that defends the condo owner and the legal firm that defends the board. You understand the incredible potential conflict there is. It's a small crowd of lawyers here, so there's nowhere to run to. So this poor person has spent 20,000 bucks only to discover that the firm was representing the landlord. So you wonder, how independent could the lawyer be if the firm is supporting the other side?

It's a big problemo that we have, and that's why Marchese has proposed in the last three years that we

create a review board similar to a tribunal that exists for tenants. A review board would do the following: Where there is a dispute between a condo owner and a developer—and the disputes are legion—they would be able to go to a tribunal to defend themselves quickly and cheaply. That's what I've recommended in the last three years. I will do so again on May 10, when I bring my bill back again with some other amendments.

If you've got a problem, as a condo owner, with a property manager that may not be competent, what do you do? We have seen examples of tremendous fraud that has happened with a number of individuals that simply have not been too nice. They have been taken to court, and the fact of the matter is that when that happens, most of the condo owners lose.

What we need to do is license the property managers, something that the condo managers of Ontario support, and I will introduce that as an amendment in the bill that I will present on May 10, because we believe it's time that they be licensed. That's something that I believe has wide support from a lot of property managers.

Now, in that regard, I will be proposing that it's the government that has oversight and not some independent board where they oversee themselves. I don't support that. I say this on the record, and I've told this to the condo managers of Ontario, that I would prefer government oversight, not their own oversight. But it's still better than what we've got at the moment.

So you've got a review board that would allow people to defend themselves against terrible developers, because while we've got some good developers, there are some that are not so good.

Remember this: Condo developers have very expensive lawyers that write these declarations, which is the condo contract that you sign when you move in. Those contracts that are signed, those declarations, are deliberately confusing and deliberately complex, and they're done in such a way that the person who has the upper hand is the developer, not the condo owner. So we need to look at this, we need to deal with that, and it's something that I hope to be able to talk about on May 10. But that is another serious problem that we've got, and more and more, as we get more condominiums built, the declarations become more complex and more one-sided.

1420

Remember, the majority of people who buy condominiums are just ordinary people. There are some wealthy millionaires, but the majority are normal people. They do not read the declarations. Those who say "consumer beware, buyer beware" don't care about whether or not people are reading it, because they say it's your responsibility to read on your own or to hire a condo lawyer. It's too expensive; condo lawyers will cost at least \$3,500 to review your declaration. Very few people do it. Ordinary lawyers can't see the ins and outs of these problems, so most people don't even hire them, let alone a condo lawyer. Most people have no one except the real estate agent, and they don't know enough to be able to pick up the problems that are in those declarations.

There are many, many problems. I believe we need a comprehensive overhaul to protect condo owners. This is a small step in the right direction. That's why I support it. I don't want to attack it in any way, because I think it's a good thing. But it's simply not adequate vis-à-vis the many problems that you highlighted, that I agree with.

If we're going to do this, we need to open up the condo law altogether, and I am hoping that this new Minister of Consumer Services will finally do that. Small measures are simply not enough. We need to do a lot more than what we have seen in the last little while.

I congratulate the member for bringing this forward. It's a good beginning. I hope your minister will do much more, and I hope you and others will support my bill on May 10.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** Actually, I am very pleased to stand and support my colleague from Mississauga East-Cooksville in motion number 25. She is actually a wonderful addition to our Peel caucus and our Liberal caucus, and this motion is well thought out.

I actually had the opportunity to be the Minister of Consumer Services for a short while, and I am actually aware of this situation. I am also very supportive of any measures or mechanisms that make the dispute resolution process simpler and timely for Ontarians.

We are building more condos in Ontario than Chicago and New York combined. If you look at that, then we need to look at what are some of the problems that condo owners are facing. If the current process is time-consuming, is costly, then we need to find a way to make it simpler.

I think the member from Mississauga East-Cooksville made about three points, in my view, in this motion. First, she is trying to make a case that the current process is very costly, because it's very time-consuming. The second point she is making is, when people are trying to make some small changes in their condos, and if the process is very costly and time-consuming, then people have to think twice and may not take the opportunity to go through the dispute resolution mechanism. The third point I think she also makes quite well is that if there is a process available out there which is much simpler, and we can learn from the other jurisdiction to see how they are dealing with this situation, then we should definitely be looking at those processes.

From my point of view, actually, I am supportive of all those things she is saying. We don't have a monopoly on knowledge. If there are processes that are available that are much simpler and actually work and make the life of the people simpler, then we should definitely look at those processes.

The member from Mississauga East-Cooksville also has given some examples of the jurisdictions that we can actually look to. I will actually encourage the ministry to look at those jurisdictions and see if those processes, in fact, work and if it can make life easier.

Mr. Speaker, let me just tell you a little bit. The Licence Appeal Tribunal comes under my responsibility



right now. Even in that, the LAT, we have looked at the processes to make it simpler, fairer and actually more accessible to the people. So, anything that we can do to make the life of the people easier, I think we need to do it. We owe it to the people of Ontario.

I really want to encourage my colleague from Mississauga East–Cooksville and congratulate her on bringing this motion forward, and I will wholeheartedly support this.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I am pleased to rise to speak to this motion 15. Someone once said that the secret to a happy life is learning to enjoy someone you don't approve of. Nowhere is that, indeed, more obvious than in our cities, which are full of exciting friction and vivid contrast. Understanding is critical to the whole urban ecosystem.

The same is true of high-density development, where give-and-take is essential. A condominium is a community of people with common interests and, in some cases, similar tastes. But that doesn't mean they are alike in every way. Neighbours in condos may be strangers to each other, but they're not strangers between one another. Noises, pets, property standards or something more serious—anything and everything can be fodder for disagreement and dispute, and things don't always follow the most obvious and neighbourly plan.

Alternate dispute resolutions experienced a shot in the arm about 11 years ago when mandatory mediation and arbitration of Ontario condominium disputes came into effect. Even so, we see time and time again that things escalate needlessly, bogging everyone down in political headaches and legal red tape.

There was a story in the *Globe and Mail* in late February about a couple who violated the no-pets policy of their condo and brought in a very vocal parrot. That decision took them through an 18-month legal process and the threat of having to pay \$41,000 to cover the condo corporation's costs. That's a whole lot of drama and emotional turbulence that you have to imagine could have been avoided.

Obviously this is also about protecting our investments, but I think sometimes we forget that we have tools available to us that don't involve the courts. Many condo corporations have provisions in their individual bylaws that insist that disputes between the condo board and condo owners or residents must go to an informal negotiation meeting as a first step before mediation or arbitration proceedings begin.

I think that this is the kind of temperament that this motion aims to achieve. Yes, we want to ensure that the right to own and enjoy a property in Ontario can be exercised without the concern of high costs of enforcement.

We must also acknowledge that every condo developer, manager and owner is unique, and that any attempts to paint all condo matters with a single brush isn't going to work. This bill could be made stronger, but ultimately we

do not need an additional layer of bureaucracy. We just need to make the Condominium Act work smarter.

I support the sensible measures laid out in this bill, and I hope that it will be approved, if and when it goes to committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Let me first congratulate the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing forth this resolution, which aims to address a number of problems associated with condominiums, condominium owners and all the regulations that indeed regulate condominiums. It is since 1998 that the act has not been visited, and I think it is time that indeed we do revisit the act.

Given the content of the resolution, I wouldn't be surprised if the Minister of Consumer Services will pick this one up and, in due course, come up with proposed legislation that will deal indeed, in a very deep and acceptable and effective way, to come up with a solution to this particular problem.

I don't pretend that I have most of the condominiums in Metro, in Toronto, and when we deal with the legislation here, we do not specifically address it to our particular area or a particular city or location; it is for the entire province. But I know that this resolution comes at a very peculiar time, when we have seen in the last 10, 12 years, condominium buildings—the condominium industry has been burgeoning. I think we are the fastest-growing city in the world, if you will, in building condominiums.

1430

Associated with that, Speaker, you can see that we have first-time buyers; we have single people; we have empty-nesters buying condos. Some 62% of the homes sold in the Toronto and GTA area are condominiums. So I don't have to tell you, coming from a municipal background—and I have been a manager, as well, of condominiums—the problems associated with this particular time.

So I think we have to commend the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing this resolution. I hope that we can not only accept it and approve it in the House today, but I hope that the government will pick it up and indeed bring forth some changes to the legislation governing condominiums to address the many, many issues.

I have a large part of a condominium up in the Keele and Finch area. That's right in the heart of York University, next to the new subway station going to York at Keele and Finch. I can't tell you the problems associated between management, board and condominium owners. It is very difficult to accept some of the conditions and the inability for us not to be able to do anything to assist those people to assist themselves as well, because they don't have the means.

Often, I have to say that the management and board members are in cahoots, to the terrible detriment of the condominium owners, and they don't have recourse. They do not have recourse and they suffer.

So I hope, with the help of this resolution as a good beginning, thanks to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, that the government, through its ministries, can indeed look at the act, which, since 1998, has not been looked at, and bring forth some good, responsible, acceptable recommendations that will assist indeed the condominium owners. I thank you, Speaker, for your time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The member for Cooksville–Mississauga East brings forward—in fact, Cooksville–Mississauga East: I was born in that riding, on Tomken Road, just below Bloor. There was a lovely apple orchard that used to be there. Some of the trees are still around the houses that were in that area.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** He took one of the trees and made Chudleigh's apple—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** However, the member mentioned in her opening comments that this—

**Interjection:** Great apple pie.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Apple pie comments always are welcome. I hope we don't have a spring frost. The blossoms are coming out far too early, and a spring frost would wipe out a lot of apples in this province. I hope the government would have a program in place through their crop insurance to make sure that those apple farmers are protected.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'd ask the member to stick to the debate.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Oh. We're not debating apple pie today? There's always room for apple pie, Speaker.

She mentioned in her opening remarks that the condominium issue is very new. Twenty-five years ago, it was a rare thing to have a condominium. Today, they outnumber—at least the new ones—apartment buildings. They're growing like crazy.

We all know how to buy a house. We've been buying houses for hundreds of years, as a society. We know what to do when we go and buy a house. We look at the foundation, the electrical, the plumbing; we look at the yard; we consider the schools in the area; we consider the transportation in the area. We know how to go about purchasing a home.

When it comes to condominiums, we look for many of the same things, but I think you also have to consider the condominium board. What is it going to be like to live in this facility with your neighbours? The community that you move into when you buy a house has neighbours, and you have to consider what those neighbours are like and whether or not you will fit into that community and whether you'll be happy in that community.

The same thing applies, and even perhaps more so, in a condominium. Is the condominium board one that likes to increase their fees, increase their services? Do they want to spend other people's money as opposed to their own? That's a consideration that you have to make when you move into a condominium. Those kinds of issues become part and parcel of the value of that property. If

you have a condominium board that administers the property in a very reasonable and prudent manner, it adds value to that property. If you have a condominium board that does not consider the needs or wishes of the owners of the condos, that becomes a detriment to the value of that property.

I think this whole condominium thing is an evolution. It's an evolution of how to buy condominiums, which we perhaps haven't had a lot of experience in. I know that condominium fees can vary tremendously. You can have condo fees that run in excess of \$30,000 a year; you can have condominium fees that are less than, perhaps, \$1,500 a year. All those funds, all those dollars, represent services. You may want those services in your condo building or you may not want those services. That becomes part and parcel of your purchasing decision as to how much service you want and how many fees you want to pay.

The difficulty, of course, comes—and I think that's what the members' motion is trying to address—when you buy into a condominium at a price point of fees that you expect to pay and then, over time, those fees drastically change because the condominium board may want more services than you're willing to pay for at that particular time. I think that is the crux of this bill.

Now, I'm not sure whether I support this motion or not; I'm still listening to the debate. But the thing I don't like about this motion is that we're asking other people to make decisions for us. I would be far more supportive if you came to this House with a proposal to say, "This is what we should be doing to solve this problem or to create the opportunity to solve this problem," as opposed to leaving it up to the civil service or to a third group. It's like the budget you just introduced, where you're going to have a committee look at the possibility of creating more jobs. I suspect the only jobs that can be created out of that committee are the people who are sitting on the committee. But having someone else make decisions for things that should be happening in this House, I think, is a problem. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Willowdale.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak in support of this motion. I commend the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing this forward.

The issue of disputes between condominium owners and managers, and then condominium owners amongst themselves—you know, two people on the same floor having a fight over how the hallway should be decorated and so on—has consumed an inordinate amount of my time in the constituency office in Willowdale.

Some people say Willowdale has the most condos in Toronto; some people say it's the second most. But there are a huge number of condominiums in Willowdale, and they are growing up mushrooms all along the Yonge Street corridor, where the two subway streets intersect.

Condo issues are of such importance in Willowdale that in the 2011 election, a group, the Condominium



Institute, the condominium owners and other people interested in condominium issues, sponsored an all-candidates meeting that was devoted solely to condominium issues. That was very well attended. All the political parties—the NDP attended, the Liberal Party attended, there was a Green Party attendee and a couple of other political parties attended. But do you know which party did not attend that all-candidates meeting dealing exclusively with condominium issues in Willowdale? The Tory candidate in the last election did not attend that meeting. I'm told that the Condominium Institute and the condominium owners association of the Yonge/Sheppard corridor in Willowdale pleaded with him. They pleaded with his campaign manager. They pleaded with his riding association. "Please participate in this all-candidates meeting because it's a huge issue in Willowdale." He would not attend. He would not participate in that debate. So of course, they did the usual thing: They set up a chair with his name on it—an empty chair. I just want to add that to the debate as an indication as to what the Tories think of this very, very important issue in Willowdale.

1440

When we got into the all-candidates debate, a lot of the issues revolved around—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Durham, you have a right to ask a point of order, but I'll ask you to wait until I recognize you. Okay.

Would the member from Willowdale at least debate the issue that is in front of us?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I take the member opposite's point. I will speak to condominium issues today in this House in a way and in a manner that the Tory candidate did not last fall.

Now, on to the substance of it. One of the big issues that came up—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Willowdale, I will warn you for the last time. Please debate the motion that is in front of us.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** The resolution does address this important issue of how to deal with essentially the more minor disputes that occupy a tremendous amount of time in my constituency office and with the constituents.

In the old Condominium Act, the arbitration and mediation process was set up essentially with the idea to deal with big disputes involving board governance and the condominium agreements between the owners and the contractors. With so many condominium owners out there now, there is a whole new level of issues, and that is, issues between individual condominium owners.

I think the examples have been used: One owner wants to have a barbecue; the other one doesn't want to have a barbecue. One wants to have a green rug; one wants to have a blue rug. They get into these really difficult and personal and passionate arguments about these issues. And often, there's no way to resolve them short of that really expensive system. This puts in a much simpler

way to deal with these relatively minor disputes. It's needed legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Mississauga East-Cooksville—a reasonable motion to solve problems. I think that's something that's laudable.

By the way, the Condominium Act was actually created when we were in government. I was part of that government and led some of the consultations. The main consultant was actually Jim Flaherty, now the finance minister of Canada. So, we do have an interest in making arrangements for the contract provisions.

You have to look at a condo as a vertical subdivision. There's everything in there, under the kitchen sink. It's not for everyone.

I think the member from Halton made some very, very good points—outside the apple tree discussions. It was quite relevant to the discussion of how difficult it is. I think the member from Burlington as well made some very good remarks.

But it is really all about the relationship-building and solving problems. The most pressing thing, of course, is the reserve funds. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Mississauga East-Cooksville, you have two minutes for a reply.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to begin by thanking all of the members who spoke to this bill. Thank you so much. In particular, I was impressed by the passion with which the member from Trinity-Spadina spoke. Thank you so much; I really appreciate that. One thing that struck me was, he talked about quick and cheap, and that's exactly what I want: a quick and cheap solution, not just for the condo board and the condo owner, but also for government.

My idea today is not about creating more layers of bureaucracy necessarily to the point that I believe the member from Burlington made, but rather to simplify the process.

The member from Halton made a good point about the fact that "buyer beware." So if you are going to be buying a condo, perhaps you should read the condo act before you buy it or look at the board of directors. But the challenge is that the boards of directors change. When you buy the condo, it might be just fine and dandy, but three years later you have a rogue board in there, and then what do you do? So, it is that sort of thing that my motion, or my resolution, looks to solve.

Also, the member from Halton had some beef with the fact that my resolution is not prescriptive enough. There are two ways to look at it. Like the member from Mississauga-Erindale said, none of us have a monopoly on good ideas. The good news today, I think, is that we all agree that there is a problem. That's always a good place to start, that all of us agree there's a problem.

I'm open to suggestions. I'm open to working with all of you to find a reasonable solution that's quick and cheap, not just for the condo owner, not just for the

condo board, but for the Ontario taxpayer as well. Thank you so much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Orders of the day.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT  
ACT (BRAKE PAD STANDARDS), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT  
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE  
(NORMES RELATIVES  
AUX PLAQUETTES DE FREIN)

Mrs. Sandals moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to brake pad standards and specifications / Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui a trait aux normes et aux caractéristiques relatives aux plaquettes de frein.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to begin by introducing some folks who just arrived in the gallery to listen to the debate. From Guelph, some folks from ABS Friction, which is a brake pad manufacturer in my riding: Rick Jamieson, who's the CEO; John Burns, who is the president and COO; Jason Janssen; Scott McKay; and Robert Pitt.

Rick is actually—yes, you guys can stand up. Welcome.

*Applause.*

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Rick is the past chair of the Friction Material Standards Institute for North America, and he's actually a member of their standards negotiating committee with California and Washington, which I will explain later. I'd like to thank them for their assistance in drafting the bill.

Also present is Elizabeth Harvey, who's the provincial manager of government relations for the Ontario Lung Association. I'd like to thank the lung association for their support. Thank you, Elizabeth, for being here.

When I get into my car, I want to be sure that I've got good brakes and I can stop. I make certain assumptions that I'm sure are the same assumptions that most people do. Because it's really important that I be able to stop, and the government is in charge of important safety standards, I just presume that there are some safety standards for the brakes on my car.

That's only partly right. When you buy a new car, there are, in fact, North American safety standards for the original equipment. But eventually those brakes will wear out and you go to get them replaced, and in Canada, there is no standard for aftermarket brakes. It's buyers beware, and you really do need to beware because most of us don't actually realize that. Ontario brake manufacturers do, in fact, meet some voluntary standards and

their brakes are perfectly safe, but that can't be said of every brake on the market in Ontario.

The other assumption I would make is that Ontario, because of our health and safety legislation, no longer uses asbestos. Again, that's only sort of true. We don't use asbestos in the manufacturing process in Ontario, but there's actually no ban in Canada that says that you can't bring products which contain asbestos into the country. There lies the problem.

Bill 51 would actually address both of these issues. Firstly, it would permit Ontario to set standards for brakes, and secondly, and perhaps most importantly, it would make sure that the brakes we use in Ontario don't contain asbestos.

You might ask, what does asbestos have to do with brakes? As we know, asbestos is a strong, heat-resistant and cheap material. Because of that, it can be used and in fact used to be used in Ontario as a cheap, effective material in the manufacture of brake pads. But Ontario brake pad manufacturers don't use asbestos anymore. Why? Simply because asbestos causes cancer. A brake pad manufacturer in Ontario is not allowed to use an industrial process that involves mixing in little fibres, little bits of asbestos. Ontario workplace health and safety legislation does not permit it. So Ontario-manufactured brake pads, be they original equipment or aftermarket, do not contain asbestos. That much is clear. But brake pads manufactured outside North America can, and often do, contain asbestos. In fact, it might even be asbestos that's been mined in Quebec, shipped abroad and comes back in the brake pad. Those asbestos-containing brake pads can quite legally be imported into Canada. Statistics Canada reports that more than \$2.6 million worth of asbestos brake pads entered the country in 2011, and you might buy those brake pads.

1450

A few years ago, a Seattle newspaper went around and collected dust from garages that did brake repairs and sent this out to a lab to be analyzed. What they found from this analysis was that the dust collected from the garages that did brake repairs could have anywhere from 2% to 64% of asbestos content. Hugely variable, obviously—it would depend in what market the brake repair shop was working and what percentage they happened to have of foreign-manufactured brakes. Think what that means to the mechanic working in the garage. They're breathing asbestos in from the dust. As they open up the wheel and go to work on the brake pads, they get the dust. They may be breathing it in or they may get it on their hands, on their coffee cup, on their lunch, on their clothing and, one way or another, end up ingesting the asbestos dust.

According to recent studies, the incidence of lung cancer in automotive mechanics is significantly higher than in the general population. Mesothelioma is a rare cancer that affects those who have been exposed to asbestos. Naturally, a higher prevalence rates exists for mesothelioma and those who have worked regularly with asbestos.



The occupations with the greatest risk of exposure to asbestos include construction workers, workers in energy plants and oil fields, boiler workers, pipefitters, shipyard workers and sailors—places where we traditionally expect to find asbestos problems—and automotive brake repair workers.

So let's think about what happens when I bring my car into the shop to get the brakes repaired. How would the mechanic know if the brake pads, which have now deteriorated and got the dust all over them, contain asbestos? Well, if the brake pads were manufactured in North America, they might have what's called an edge code marking. AMECA, which stands for the Automotive Manufacturers Equipment Compliance Agency, has a ratings system and compliance program. They test the brake pads. They ensure they meet the performance standards and assign an edge code which goes on the metal housing, which identifies the manufacturer of the brake pad and the ratings standard which has been met. This provides traceability of the product for the garage.

On the other hand, if there is no edge code marking, the mechanic has no way of knowing who manufactured the brake pad, the country of origin or, most importantly, whether the brake pad contains asbestos and the wheel well is now full of life-threatening asbestos dust. The mechanic has no choice. We just expect the mechanic to go ahead and do the brake job.

Bill 51 includes a clause that would permit a regulation to be made to prescribe the use of edge code markings. This would provide the labelling and traceability which is currently lacking.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Timmins—James Bay on a point of order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm just trying to be helpful to my friend across the way, as she is dealing with a bit of a throat irritation.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Yes. I have what seems to be the caucus cold here. So thank you very much to the member from Timmins—James Bay.

When I introduced a similar bill back in 2009, it received the unanimous backing of this Legislature at second reading. At that time it was the first bill in North America to propose a ban on the use of asbestos in brake pads. Since then, two states—California and Washington—have actually passed legislation to control the materials used in the manufacture of brake friction materials. In both cases, in addition to controlling the use of asbestos, their legislation also set standards to limit the use of copper and other elements, such as chromium, lead and mercury.

Those states are concerned that copper dust—again, the same thing; the brake pad breaks down and you end up with dust, so if you have copper in the composition, you end up with copper dust. They're concerned that the copper dust is polluting their water and is toxic to aquatic life, including salmon. Bill 51 does not mention the copper pollution issue, but it does have the authority to prescribe standards that could be used to bring Ontario in

line with North American standards as they evolve in the future.

Back to the asbestos issue: The obvious question is, why not just ban the import of asbestos-containing brake pads? The unfortunate answer is that no federal government has been willing to deal with the asbestos issue. Health Canada's position is that the primary risks associated with asbestos in brake pads occur only during the manufacturing process, because science indicates that the problem with asbestos is when you breathe it in or ingest it. So their position is that if the asbestos fibres are, as they say, tightly bound in a product, there is no significant health risk, which means that if you work for Canada Customs, you're not going to get asbestos, because it comes in tightly bound. They're conveniently ignoring that by the time the brake pads are installed and the brake pads work the way they're supposed to, the brake pad breaks down, you end up with a wheel well full of asbestos particles, and the mechanic is being exposed to free asbestos fibres, and that's the problem that we have to solve.

For people who work in boiler rooms or in all the other places that I talked about, we've dealt with the problem. But we haven't dealt with the problem for mechanics, and the only way we can solve it for people who work with brake pads is to ban the use of asbestos in those brake pads, and Bill 51 will do just that. I ask for your support. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

*Applause.*

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm pleased to rise in support of this bill, and I'm glad that one of my caucus members applauded.

I'll say at the outset that I will certainly be supporting this bill. I know that this is a rare occasion when the member from Guelph and myself would agree on anything, but here we are, and it just shows you the miracle of this place.

I must say, when I first got the honourable member's letter saying that she was going to introduce a private member's bill that deals with brake pads, I must admit, I thought, "Is there nothing better that you can do with a private member's bill than put forward a bill that deals with brake pads?" But we looked into this, and I must say that it is a worthy use of our time, not only for the purpose of putting in place this legislation but also to raise awareness. You know, we in here certainly think, at least sometimes, that we're fairly well informed, but again, occasions like this just teach us how little we sometimes do know about important issues, especially when it comes to health and safety. The member has a bill here, I believe, that is worth supporting.

**1500**

I had a discussion with a constituent of mine, a gentleman by the name of Brian Roffey, who is involved in a family business called CM Brake Inc. There's quite a history to that company. It actually started back in 1978, went through some difficult times with the economy, and

is back in business. I asked him his view about this initiative. He, of course, was very supportive. They, as a business, imported product from China for a number of years. In fact, they had an operation in China as well. To be fair, he did say that the product that they manufactured in China did not contain asbestos, but admitted that many of those products do. Of course, no manufacturer in Ontario is using asbestos, but the issue here is, how can we control what comes in and what is sold at the end of the day?

In fact, it's interesting. For a few years before I was elected, Speaker, I drove a Corvette; that's something in the past now. But something about those brakes—I took the car in, and all of a sudden the brakes started to squeal every time I touched the brake. I thought, "I've just spent \$2,500," I think it was, "on a brake job here, and why are my brakes squealing?" Everybody looked at me when I came to a stop sign. It had nothing to do with me; it was my brakes.

So I went back to the mechanic and I said, "What's going on here?" He said, "Well, you know, there's been a change. We used to use brake pads that contained asbestos, and ever since we can no longer use those, we've got these things, and there's"—I'm not going into the technical explanation. I'll just say they squeaked. I was willing to have him put the asbestos back on, but he refused and said, "No, they're no longer available."

Here's my point. The point is that here in Ontario, I think we have obviously seen the wisdom of ensuring that our products are manufactured in accordance with health and safety standards. What the honourable member is doing is wanting to entrench this, to ensure that even products that are imported are restricted from use.

The question that I'm going to have for the member is: How will this be enforced? At the end of the day, every piece of legislation that comes forward with good intentions has to ask this question: How are we going to ensure at the end of the day that what is proclaimed here, in terms of intent, can actually be implemented so that it does benefit us in this province?

So I'll wind up my comments by simply saying I appreciate the legislation being put forward. I will certainly support it, and we would look forward to some of the details in terms of the actual enforcement. I understand the stamping and so on and so forth. With every legislation, with every law, with every regulation, there are always those who spend a great deal of time figuring out, "How can we avoid it, and how can we get around it?" So it depends on what we can do to ensure that it does get enforced.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm going to ask the House for a bit of indulgence, because I will be talking about asbestos and I will be talking about the member's bill, but from a very different context, and I would ask for your indulgence.

Back in the day, I guess 1974 or 1973, whatever it was, when I came out of the armed forces, I was looking

for work. Back in Timmins, mining is the game. So I went around thinking about it, talking to my friends. As I came into town—I believe I came in on a Monday or a Tuesday. I met with a couple of my buddies and I said, "So where's the work?" And they said, "Oh, you want a great job? Go to Johns-Manville, out at the Penhorwood mine by Foleyet. They're hiring and they pay more than anybody else." Little did I know that it was an asbestos mine.

So the next morning—it was January, if I remember correctly, or February—I hitchhiked out to Foleyet, which is about an hour and a half ride, hitchhiking, from Timmins, and I got dropped off at the highway. I always remember looking up this road that I had to walk to get to this mine. There was a huge pile of what we called tailings from the mill that you can still see today when you drive up there.

Anyway, so here I am. It's 40 below zero, short hair—well, I've got short hair again today, but back then we used to have lot longer hair. I go walking up this road, and I get to the mine and I have no idea. I don't know if it's a gold mine; I don't know if it's silver; I have no idea what it is. It's a job, right?

So I show up. I get there and I wait at the HR department and they say, "Hang on. The manager will call you and will see you in a minute." I thought, "That's rather interesting." About a half hour goes by. The manager comes by and he says, "Listen, sorry. We're not hiring." I said, "Hang on a second. I just walked up your bloody road. It took me two or three hours to get up here. I ain't leaving until you give me a job." So he says, "I like your spunk. I'll tell you what: Show up here tomorrow morning. Go buy some steel-toed boots and you've got a job."

I managed to get a ride back with somebody who was leaving the mine that I happened to know and drive back to Timmins. I'm all excited, being 19 years old at the time. I went out for a couple of beers, excited, celebrating with my buddies. I've got a good job; it pays good money. Next day I get to the mine, and I've got my steel-toed boots on and I've got my hard hat that they gave me—actually, we didn't have hard hats back then. Believe it or not, we didn't have hard hats. It was not mandatory. Actually, it was just the steel-toed boots.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** That explains it.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It explained what happened to me along the way. But this is going to get funnier.

So I get to this place, and the story is that I'm supposed to be a sweeper. The sweeper was the person who went around in the mill, swept up the asbestos off the ground and collected it so that it just didn't sit around and puff up all over for people to breathe in. I got really lucky. I happened to be walking by the mechanics shop, and the guy who runs the mechanics shop was a guy who used to be a first aid instructor when I was in the air cadets, Carl Habla, who still lives in the city of Timmins today, and I'll give you the spelling later.

Anyway, so Carl says, "Hey, young soldier"—  
*Interjection.*



**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** He's going to get the Hansard, for sure.

He says, "Hey, young soldier; nice to see you've done that. Stay with me. I'll give you a millwright's apprenticeship." So that was my first thing. I became a millwong, as I called it, because I wasn't a very good welder, I've got to tell you.

Anyway, so I get the job—and I'm getting to your bill. So I get this job, and what I start noticing as I work in this place is that people tend not to work there for a very long time because they get sick. When you're a young guy of 19, you don't think of these things. You say to yourself, "I'm here; it's a job. It's paying good."

God, I made so much money in that place in two months, I bought a car—cash. I always remember. It was \$4,200 to buy a Plymouth Grand Fury—black with a red top is what I bought. I paid in cash in about two, two-and-a-half months because the Steelworkers, who had the collective agreement, had a really good salary, but you got double time and a half after one shift, and they were always on double time and a half because they didn't have people. So I made a— a bunch of money. I was going to use mining talk there, but I can't use it in the Legislature.

**Interjection:** It's an expletive.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's an expletive. You can say that.

I was doing different jobs in the mine. I always remember that I'd go into what we call the fibreizers, which crush the rock and take the asbestos out. The guy I was working with—we were doing a job. There was so much dust, including asbestos, in the air, that you literally couldn't see the arc at the end of your welding rod in what we were doing, it was that dusty. Essentially, you'd put your helmet in front of you and you'd go "bzzzz" and you'd just hope you hit the right thing and hope that you welded it. I've got to tell you, it was bad aim. I normally welded all the wrong things, but that's a whole other story.

But this guy was spitting blood.

**Interjection:** Terrible.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** So I thought to myself, "Jeez, this is quite something." Then I noticed that a lot of people that had been working there for a while no longer worked there anymore because they were off on disability. Back then, you couldn't get workers' compensation; they'd go on pogeys, is where they would go. Eventually they would end up on welfare because there weren't really any benefits back then.

So here's the story: I go to work one day, and the manager calls everybody in the mine together. This is like 1975, I think. He says, "Everybody: The mine is closing down, and you're all to go home today. But we want to tell you that the mine is closing down because the NDP in the Legislature have introduced legislation and forced the Conservative government to clean up the act when it comes to the asbestos industry. We can't fix the mine to meet the new standards. We're closing down. Don't forget, next election, not to vote NDP, because they took your job away."

*Applause.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Hang on, My Conservative friend: "Yeah."

I am mad as a—mad as Jesus, as they say up there. I can't use bad words. I was as mad as the person down there.

**1510**

So I get to the Steelworker hall and I say to my friend Mike Farrell, who was the staff rep, blah blah blah, as you would as a young man who's lost your job. "What's going on?" He says, "Listen. Let me call Brother Stephen. We'll see if we can have Brother Stephen talk to you about what's going on"—because I was mad; I lost my job. The long and the short of the story is that he calls down to Stephen Lewis's office here at Queen's Park, and of course, "Stephen isn't here." They said, "He'll call you back." Yeah, give me a break. A politician's going to call me back? Give me a break—let alone the leader of the party.

I'm at home a couple of days later. The phone rings. Ring, ring, ring; it's Stephen Lewis. He says, "Hi. Is this Gilles Bisson?" I says, "Yeah, who's this?"

"Stephen Lewis."

"Stephen who?"

He tells me who he is.

I've only got five minutes—this is a much longer story, but it gets good.

I yell at him on the phone: "You took my job. You took my job. What are you doing?" He says, "I'll tell you. I understand your frustration, but this is an important health and safety issue.

"Do me a favour. Are there other people in Timmins who are mad because they've lost their job?"

I says, "Yeah, the whole mine."

He says, "I want all the members to come to a union meeting, which I will attend. I will coordinate my schedule with the staff rep from the Steelworkers in Timmins. I will answer all questions in regard to this decision we made in the Legislature," and I thought, "Right on. I'm going to organize that one. Woohoo!" I was an organizer even back then.

He said, "But make sure the girlfriends and wives are there," and I thought, "Whoa, cha-ching! Wow, I'm going to have them all swinging off the chandeliers. I'm going to be able to wax eloquently in front of everybody."

So we organized the meeting—four minutes; I've got to really shorten this down. We organized the meeting, at which point—true story—Brother Lenny Rice, who was president of the local, says, "Okay, Brothers and Sisters. Here goes. We have Brother Stephen Lewis here, and Brother Lewis wants to hear from people about how they feel about this decision to shut down the mine. All those in favour of Mr. Lewis please stand in this lineup, and all those opposed stand in that lineup." Of course, I ran to that lineup and I wanted to be the last speaker. There wasn't a soul at the "pro" mike; they were all at the "con" mike.

All these Steelworker friends of mine get up there and we wax eloquently and we yell at Stephen and we're mean and nasty and all of those things that you can be. It gets to my turn and I'm the meanest, I'm the nastiest, I'm the most over the top, the whole bit—at which point I'm the last speaker. Brother Lenny Rice stands up and says, "Brothers and Sisters, the leader has heard you and now it's his turn to respond."

If you've ever heard Stephen Lewis speak, he could make you melt in about five seconds. Stephen gets up and starts talking, in the way that Stephen does, about why the New Democrats did exactly what you're trying to do with your bill, because at the end of the day it was a health and safety issue. Is any job worth the death or disease of a person? Here we were, all these big burly Steelworker guys, going, "Oh, God, Brother Lewis, we are not worthy. We are workers. What do we know? Thank you for having saved our lives." Literally, it was one of those moments.

At the end of it, Brother Lenny Rice, the president of the local, gets up and says, "Brothers and Sisters, now that you've heard from the leader, I have here membership cards. Anybody who would like to sign up and be a member of the party, please line up." I became a New Democrat because Stephen Lewis made me lose my job, and that's why I'm here today. Wasn't that a great story?

*Applause.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I had the glory of telling Stephen that story some years ago. I'd forgotten about it completely, and we got into a conversation about asbestos. I say, "That reminds me," and he goes, "I remember. You were that obnoxious little guy in the back." He got that right—well, I'm the nice guy now. Now they call me Papa Bear.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Papa Bear—I can understand that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yeah, I'm Papa Bear.

Anyway, the member raises what I think is an important point—I just used that story as the example—that we do have a collective responsibility in this Legislature to try to figure out how we can make sure that workers and citizens in this province are safe. I think we need to take these opportunities seriously because, in the end, there are workers and other people who in fact get in contact with asbestos as a result of working with brake pads.

So I fully support the member's bill, and I just wanted to tell that story one day to put on the record for my good friend Stephen Lewis. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm certainly happy to stand in support of Bill 51, brought by our colleague from Guelph. I'm also absolutely delighted, as I'm sure we all are, to learn that we now have the member from Timmins—James Bay. Not only was his life saved by that particular event in his past, but of course he's a great addition to this chamber as well.

But while I'm happy to speak today, I'm also very disappointed because I spoke in June 2009, also in support

of the bill brought by our colleague. To me this is a very obvious gap in terms of health protection of workers. The epidemiological evidence is absolutely clear in terms of the health hazards related to asbestos exposure.

In fact, as I remember studying epidemiology, the Johns-Manville case, Asbestos Quebec—these were where the first studies were done. And the fact that we have this particular cancer, mesothelioma, that is a product of asbestos exposure—it's become literally a marker for contact with asbestos. We still have some 400 new cases of mesothelioma each year. Many other cancers and pleural diseases in fact are related to asbestos exposure, and have been demonstrated to be connected to asbestos exposure through very many studies.

Princess Margaret Hospital, at the moment, as you may have seen on The National, hosted by Peter Mansbridge recently, is conducting CT scans for early diagnosis of mesothelioma in those who may have been exposed to asbestos. I think it's somewhat shocking, when you look at the WSIB fact sheet here in Ontario. They talk very clearly about asbestos-related diseases. And right under the list of workers who get asbestos-related diseases are auto brake mechanics. There are some 4,300 workers in this particular industry in Canada. I find it really shocking that they continue to be exposed in aftermarket brake pad repair and replacement.

The member from Guelph has explained that asbestos fibres are microscopic particles and so they are in the dust in auto shops. They can enter the body either through inhalation or even through ingestion. They can remain on your clothes when you go home, and your family can be exposed to asbestos in that way as well.

In this WSIB Ontario fact sheet there's a little piece that says, "What can your employer do?" The advice is to keep the amount of asbestos dust low, and the employer is required to provide safety measures when a designated substance is used—asbestos is a designated substance. You should be protected to reduce contact with asbestos dust.

Now, I think most of us know that personal protective equipment can be very cumbersome. When you're dealing with microscopic particles, perhaps people are not as aware as they might be if they could literally see it the way they could in the mines. Using HEPA filters to vacuum the dust and so on is something that obviously should be done but is seldom done, as the member has alluded to.

There are also the home repair individuals, those who have the hobby of fixing up vehicles; they are also at risk with this type of product coming into our province and into this country. It seems perfectly obvious that the best solution is to ban the use. Europe has done this, and we should be prohibiting the import of these brake pads to Canada, not only for individual health; standards for road safety is another important issue, and of course tangible benefits to the environment.

So I would suggest that all members support this bill. I would also like to suggest to everyone watching that they may want to visit my Facebook page today to take part in



the signing of a petition to the federal government for a North American declaration to eliminate asbestos-related diseases, an effort that's been initiated by the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased to speak for a couple of minutes on Bill 51. I want to commend Ms. Sandals, the member from Guelph. She has done a great job. My first awareness of this was, of course, when she introduced it, but subsequently the issue on CBC Television, on the national news, was very, very well done. Whoever orchestrated that sort of attention: Congratulations.

1520

I think we all agree with the risk, as has been explained by the member from Oak Ridges—Markham. She of course was the medical officer of health for York region. That's why she knows all about disease and the proper terms.

I think you'll find unanimous agreement on the sentiment of putting safety first, and the health and safety of workers. I think this bill's time has come. As I said, it has been discussed. But the context of this: It's a private member's bill, and as such, whether or not it's ever called after today will be entirely in the hands of Dalton McGuinty. Our leader, Tim Hudak, would support this, I'm sure; our notes say that as well. But let's remember that if it does not become law, it's because Dalton McGuinty didn't call it. You need to know that when you leave today. It's important to put on the record.

I think our colleague Mr. Klees, who spoke, summed up some of the concerns. And the member from Timmins—James Bay gave a glowing example of his experience. Of course, when you look at some of the history of the discussion, the conversation was moved to blame the federal government, more or less, not dealing with the issue. It's a very treacherous issue federally. A couple of Prime Ministers of Canada came from Quebec. It's a huge issue in Quebec, and it was under a couple of them, Chrétien and Martin—I'm not trying to politicize it, but they should have been speaking about this years ago.

The evidence even from McGill University studies is very clear that there was some lack of consistency in the research that was being done at McGill. Recently, one of the professors, a head of research at McGill, was mentioned in some study that was done—this is a person with an Order of Canada—and the mine is still operating. So there's a lot to this.

Now your issue specifically, putting workers at risk: I support that 100%. They should not be exposed, and I think Mr. Klees raised the one thing. All the things we've said: The bill will likely pass—I'm quite confident of that—and may not ever be proclaimed. It will be up to your industry—and I'm glad you're here today—to really put pressure on the House leader as well as the Premier right after today. Start writing and get your workers to

have petitions. Make sure we're included in that. All MPPs should be included in that. That's what I think you have to do to move it along, because we believe it's the right thing to do.

It's actually a very small bill. It only changes one section, section 64 of the Highway Traffic Act. There's the bill right there. It's not a big deal, but it's very important. It's actually one line, really, and then there are some definition clauses.

So, good work on the bill. I suspect that if Ms. McKenna would like to speak in a few minutes, I'll give up the floor and let her finish her comments with respect to our support of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to rise. I've got a minute and 24 to speak on this bill.

I want to thank the member from Timmins—James Bay for his story. Of course, as a worker in the construction industry, I've had the unfortunate opportunity to work around asbestos. In fact, I was trained as a type 3 asbestos removal technician, so I'm probably one of the only ones in this House who is actually certified to remove type 3 asbestos from any facility, which is not necessarily the best job qualification for an MPP. I certainly believe that no one should need to work around this, and I think that's what the bill attempts to do: eliminate our exposure to asbestos completely in this province.

I'll have the Legislature know that at the federal level, our counterpart Pat Martin has been working tirelessly to expand our knowledge about asbestos and to remove it from export, because we are in fact exporting death to other countries when we export asbestos, and that's just simply a fact.

The member from Timmins—James Bay references the changes that were made under Stephen Lewis. Those changes were really, as we see them today, fundamental within our health and safety laws: the right to know, the right to participate and the right to refuse. Those are three things we can't imagine today that we wouldn't have had. But those were the fundamental building blocks of us knowing what we were exposed to at our workplace and ultimately knowing how to deal with it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I want to really commend the member from Guelph for bringing forward Bill 51. It's interesting that in my community of Peterborough, when I was growing up, Raybestos-Manhattan, which was the largest producer of asbestos brake pads, was manufacturing them in Peterborough. We still have many people today who suffer from asbestosis, and those who have ever known anyone who suffers from asbestosis know it's one of the most painful, agonizing ways of death. It's very slow. Of course, each and every day it reduces one's lung capacity until eventually an individual does smother. So, of course, Raybestos-Manhattan eventually ceased manufacturing asbestos brakes in my community as the indus-

try moved towards manufacturing brakes with ceramic materials that last longer and are much better, of course, for one's health and safety.

But we do know that there are countries that still manufacture those brake pads, Vietnam being one of them, that still export those materials to be used as aftermarket activities in garages and do-it-yourself-type operators who have that as a hobby, to repair cars.

We also do know that, of course, the real danger is the exposure to these asbestos fibres that float or indeed actually cling and stick to one's clothing and any other articles that might be in the immediate area. That has always been the great challenge and danger of asbestos, a material that has always been quite safe as long as it has been encapsulated but, once it starts to float freely, presents a huge danger to individuals. Of course, this has been clearly documented over many, many years from people who work in the field of occupational diseases.

So the member from Guelph presents a bill this afternoon, Bill 51. As I understand it, if this bill gets approval of this Legislature through to third reading and then on to royal assent, Ontario would become the first province in Canada to actually ban the import or sale of brake pads containing asbestos. Ontario has always been a leader in the past—it continues to be a leader today—and we need to move forward in this particular area.

It goes without saying, Mr. Speaker, that the mining of asbestos should have been banned in Canada years ago. It continues to be centred in the Thetford Mines area in the province of Quebec. But I hope, collectively, the government of Canada comes to its senses to ban the mining of this material.

When you look south of the border, the state of Washington, of course, has introduced the Better Brakes Law. On January 1, 2014, brakes in Washington will no longer contain asbestos, hexavalent chromium, mercury, cadmium, lead and many other materials. Auto shops and other distributors of brakes will be able to get rid of their inventory; they have a period of time to do that. But after January 1, 2014, they will no longer be able to sell brakes with asbestos in them.

Similarly, in the state of California, Bill 346 also has a provision, by 2014, to ban the use of asbestos. Oregon is moving in the same direction by introducing a bill in that Legislature, and New York state is also doing it.

So let Ontario be a leader again, and support Bill 51.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 51, and I am thrilled just to hear the great story from the member from Timmins–James Bay. He's such a great storyteller, and it is thrilling to sit here and listen to that. I also echo everything everybody else has said here today.

The bill essentially amends section 64 of the Highway Traffic Act in two key ways. One is to prescribe standards and specification, for aftermarket brake pads sold in Ontario. This would include certain edge code markings for the identification of the product.

The second amendment is the stipulation that those brake pads shall not contain asbestos. The bill makes mandatory what is currently a voluntary industry standard. Although Ontario manufacturers did use asbestos in the making of brake pads in the past, they no longer do that. Neither will you find brake pads containing asbestos on new cars sold in Ontario. But brake pads do wear out, and so there is an opening for aftermarket brake pads of unknown composition. Those brake pads wear out, they turn to dust, and the dust collects.

1530

Now consider what happens to the mechanic who was working on that car, working on cars all day long. They're breathing it in, they may be ingesting it, and among other things, asbestos dust causes cancer. That's a health aspect.

Then there's road safety. As a result of enhanced safety measures, graduated licensing and improved driver training, Ontario has the safest roads in North America. Mercifully, we have seen traffic fatality rates in regular decline, but accidents and collisions still rack up staggering costs—human, social and economic costs; tens of billions of dollars annually—so any legislation that promises improvements in those areas should be looked at seriously.

I do have these questions, but I am in favour of this bill's prescribed amendment. I would suggest that it be referred to committee, where it can hopefully get the attention that it deserves and hopefully tuned up.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** It's my privilege to rise today to speak in support of Bill 51. I, too, want to thank the member from Timmins–James Bay for his personal accounts from his mining days.

The changes outlined in this bill will require that cars are equipped with brake pads that meet specified safety standards, which will be outlined in regulation, as you know. The bill will require that brake pads not contain asbestos. Asbestos is toxic when fibres are present in the air that we breathe. The health risks of asbestos, as have been outlined, include asbestosis, or scarring of the lungs; mesothelioma, cancer of the lining of the chest or abdominal cavity; and lung cancer.

Asbestos is not used by Ontario manufacturers and is not required in brake pads. Asbestos is still used in other jurisdictions, and these brake pads find their way into Ontario. You can't tell if a brake pad contains asbestos just by looking at it. As asbestos in brake materials wears down through normal automobile use, asbestos-containing dust is released to the outside environment. The asbestos is then released when repair and replacement work is done. Mechanics who service brakes may risk heavy exposure to asbestos, but it's not only the mechanic that may be at risk; depending on the amount of particulate in the air, customers breathe it in as well. The mechanic may also carry asbestos home on work clothing, potentially endangering family members.

It's obvious that this bill not only speaks to the health and safety of mechanics but of others as well. Coming



from an automotive town, I certainly support any bill that improves health and safety.

According to the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, 58 auto mechanics died of asbestos-related diseases between 1996 and 2010. Speaker, we must act to protect as much as we can. The number of claims is expected to rise as, all too often, asbestos-related diseases do not appear until years after exposure. Experts have debated the usefulness of masks and gloves when it comes to preventing exposure to asbestos brake dust. Although respirators can prevent asbestos inhalation while working, the fibres can stick to clothing and equipment and be present long after the car has left the garage and work completed.

Both Canadian and American manufacturers have replaced materials in brake pads with safer alternatives. Asbestos-containing pads that come to Canada from overseas make up about 9% of the import value. Even at this level, the risk is too high to be ignored. Millions of dollars worth of asbestos pads continue to enter the country via imports. We really should be turning to the federal government and demanding a ban on these imports due to the known health risks, but for the time being we will do what we can to protect Ontarians.

Although various methods of reducing asbestos dust in garages and repair shops are available, whether or not they're used is another question. A high level of asbestos is often detected on floors, work areas and tool bins. Home auto mechanics who work with these brakes and clutches are also at risk.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Guelph, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'd like to thank the members for Newmarket–Aurora, Timmins–James Bay, Oak Ridges–Markham, Durham, Essex, Peterborough, Burlington and Windsor West for your remarks and your support, and particularly the member for Timmins–James Bay with his very vivid story about his experience in asbestos mining. I couldn't help but wonder, as you were speaking, how many of those people eventually succumbed to the lung and stomach cancers that they acquired on the job.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora actually raised an interesting issue, which is the enforcement issue. The technical answer is that there is regulatory authority within the bill, and that that's the place to sort out how you can do enforcement.

I think, however, the more practical answer is actually from Mr. Jamieson, who interestingly—because he was referenced in some of the media when we did this in 2009—received a phone call from a foreign embassy in one of the countries that does manufacture asbestos-containing brake pads. Basically, the message was that if Canada would set standards—or Ontario would set standards, which is what we have control over—they would follow them. That, in fact, absent us setting standards, they do what's cheap and effective. If we set the standards, they still want to be able to export to us because we're a big market. Set the standard; they'll follow standard. That's actually the practical answer to your concern.

In conclusion, there is absolutely no reason that we should continue to endanger workers knowingly when there's a really simple solution, which is, just say no. You cannot use brake pads in Ontario that contain asbestos.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We'll vote on this item at the end of regular business.

## GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2012

### LOI DE 2012 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

Mr. Yakabuski moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities / Projet de loi 27, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun à l'égard des remboursements de la taxe sur l'essence similaires consentis aux municipalités par le ministre.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's my pleasure to bring this issue before the Legislature once again. I'm not even actually sure how many times I've brought it. It's a number since I was elected back in 2003. The reason I keep doing it is because I actually do expect a different result. It is a fundamental issue of fairness: fairness to rural residents of Ontario, and that I would hope that this government would finally recognize that they are important too.

You see, Mr. Speaker, one of the problems is—and it is the McGuinty government that instituted it—that when they brought in the measure that they would share two cents of the gas tax with municipalities in the province of Ontario, then they added this caveat and said, "But we will only share it with those municipalities that have a public transportation system," vis-à-vis a subway or a bus system or streetcars, above-ground rail—whatever—light rail.

The reality is that in rural communities, that's not possible. It's not feasible. In fact, there are only about 81 municipalities out of 440 or so in the province of Ontario that have a public transportation system. But everybody, every single person who puts a tank of gas into their car or their truck is going to pay the 14.7 cents per litre provincial excise tax on the gasoline, and now, of course, another McGuinty measure, the HST on top of that gasoline, which now will be—the GST was on it, but now the extra 8% of provincial tax on that gasoline, so 14.7 cents a litre, plus 8%.

1540

The reality is that anybody who lives in rural Ontario knows and understands—I've been here in an apartment

in the city of Toronto since I've been a member, and I stay here part of the time. I can get around the city of Toronto without my vehicle. I wouldn't have to own a vehicle to be here and working at Queen's Park. However, when I get home on weekends, in order to serve my constituents in a riding that is 12,000 square kilometres in size, I absolutely do need a vehicle, as does every one of my constituents if they want to get around.

Unless you live right in one of the downtown areas of one of the smaller urban centres within my riding, you need a vehicle. In fact, if you are a family with both spouses working, you're likely going to need two vehicles, because the likelihood of both of you working at the same place on the same shift is in fact remote.

What happens, Mr. Speaker, is that rural people pay a disproportionate share of the gas tax in this province. They pay far more, on a per capita basis, than anyone who lives in an urban area. I drive 90,000 kilometres a year. I doubt that anybody who lives in a city in Ontario drives 90,000 kilometres a year—it's highly unlikely. As I say, it's an issue of fundamental fairness to rural people.

The other fact of the matter is that the federal government does share its gas tax revenue with all municipalities. They're always harping on the federal government and always attacking Prime Minister Harper and his policies, but here's one where the federal government understands what fairness is, so that every municipality across this country gets a share of the federal gas tax.

But the province of Ontario has decided that they will penalize rural people. And it's even more important, now, that they look at this bill and change the way they view rural people. In the last budget, you'll see they came out with a new plan to increase the cost of a driver's licence. That affects everybody. Again, I could live in Toronto without a driver's licence, but I'll tell you, I can't live up in Barry's Bay without a driver's licence.

They're going to increase the cost of registering your vehicle. As I said, if you're a family where both spouses work, chances are you need two vehicles. The other side of the coin is, if you've got children and they've got to be ferried about to hockey or soccer or something else—school projects—the reality is, we just live in a big part of the world and the need to get around is essential. So we continue to pay this gas tax, but none of it comes back to our municipalities.

I want to thank all the municipalities—I may get to some of them—but particularly my own county of Renfrew and the municipalities within, and particularly Warden Bob Sweet, who has been an ardent supporter of this. In fact, it was the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus that originally brought up the issue of gas tax fairness, and I have worked with them very closely to try to make sharing that gas tax a reality in the province of Ontario. So I do want to thank Warden Sweet for his ongoing efforts to assist in this regard and his continuing support, and all those at county council in the county of Renfrew who have worked hard to support us on this bill. But it's

not just Renfrew county; it's all across the province that would be affected by the extension of this rebate to all municipalities.

I know I'm going to get some argument from the government side, because they're going to say, "Oh well, that money is needed for public transportation." Well, you know, roads and bridges in Renfrew county or Haliburton county or Lambton county or any other county in the province of Ontario are the public transportation of rural people. There is no option. You've got to get into a vehicle, Mr. Speaker, to go out and get a quart of milk if you happen to run out of milk and it's not grocery day, but you need milk—well, you're likely going to have to get into the vehicle to go and get that milk, because that's just the reality. Not very often is there going to be a store on the corner that sells milk in the middle of nowhere.

It just comes down to an issue of fairness. Why would a government take the money from everyone, as they do with the gas tax—everyone who buys gasoline pays the gas tax—and only give it to those who they want to give it to? Is this a politically motivated thing? You have to ask yourself that.

There's an urban-rural split in this province. Is it being driven by the agenda of this government? Maybe that's what they want. Maybe that's what they want. They want an urban-rural split because it seems every time they turn around, they bring in new legislation that's hard on rural people. It doesn't matter whether it's this gas tax bill or the Endangered Species Act, which has had a terribly detrimental effect on lumbering in my area. Every time you turn around, it seems that this government is doing something to impact negatively on the way of life in rural Ontario.

For example, Mr. Speaker, I don't think you see any wind turbines other than the fancy one down at the CNE. I don't think you see any wind farms in Metro Toronto or the GTA, but they keep building them across rural parts of Ontario, even though the people steadfastly oppose that kind of policy.

But I'm going to stick to the topic, thank you very much. So let's get back to the gas tax. In Renfrew county, there are 250 bridges. I see the former Minister of Transportation here, and she would know exactly how many bridges there are in Renfrew county, and she also knows the scope and the amount of rural roads we have, too. That is the public transportation network, and it is only fair that that be supported—and not a special program. All we're asking for, Mr. Speaker, is our fair share of the gas tax that we pay. On a proportional basis, there is no one in the world who is going to be able to argue that we don't pay a greater share. On a per capita or proportional basis, we pay more because we drive more because we have to drive more.

With the price of gas—and maybe we should be talking about the price of gas and asking what the McGuinty government is actually doing about the price of gasoline. Again, if gasoline is something that you need, that you have to use in rural Ontario, but to a much greater proportion than you use in urban Ontario, again,



is this another slight to rural Ontario that we get from this government because they don't seem to be too concerned about the price of gasoline that affects everyone but affects those that use it obviously more? And those that use more, it would affect to an even greater degree yet.

So every time, I think, I stand in this House, I've always stood to stand and fight for the people in rural Ontario, because that's who I represent. But what I'm asking today is that the people on the other side who would like to consider themselves fair-minded and believe that treating people equally is important—I would ask that they would finally get around to saying, "You know what? The federal government does it. They recognize that it is right."

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** That's right. It was the Liberal federal government that first brought it in under Paul Martin. I thank my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills for putting that bug in my ear. Yes, it was a Liberal federal government that originally brought the gas tax in. The Harper Conservatives have enhanced it and made it permanent, and thank God for that, because now rural municipalities know they can plan.

How are rural municipalities supposed to plan even for infrastructure projects? Here's what they do in Ontario: They come cap in hand hoping that the minister might have some crumbs left on the table once he's given all the money to Toronto. There might be a few shillings left or shekels left for somebody in rural Ontario to do a project, but they have to come, hat in hand, begging. It is time to stand up for what is right, and all members of this Legislature should stand with me and agree that sharing the gas tax with all municipalities in the province of Ontario is the right thing to do.

1550

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I want to, as the transportation critic, just be very clear in regard to what we're going to do with this bill. Does the member raise an important issue, and that is: Do rural municipalities and small municipalities who do not have transit get a fair shake when it comes to their transportation infrastructure? I think the answer is no. There needs to be more done to make sure that communities that don't have transit are able to fix their roads and fix their bridges, because that is their transportation infrastructure. That is their transit.

So, on that point, I really do agree with the member that something needs to be done. For that reason, I will support the bill and allow it to go to committee, but I want to put a caveat, and that is, as I read the bill that the member put forward, what he's suggesting at this point is that we actually take—what happens now is, two cents out of every litre sold goes into a central pot, and that pot is then divided up amongst municipalities like mine, the city of Timmins, that has a transit system. I think there are about 100-and-some-odd of those communities out there. What's the number again? I can't remember.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** Eighty-one.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** About 81 transit systems in the province. If the intent of this bill is to make that pot smaller—whoa, I've got a real problem.

That being said, I think that there should be a debate in committee in regard to what happens with communities like Matheson, communities like Iroquois Falls, communities like Smooth Rock Falls, Hearst and others who don't have a transit system and have a real infrastructure need that they need to maintain.

I look at an example: In the town of Kapuskasing, Highway 11, which runs through that municipality, is the worst-kept piece of highway that I've seen on Highway 11. It is like washboard. You could actually take the asphalt off that road and it would probably be smoother. Why is it not being fixed? Not because the mayor and council don't want to fix it; because there's no money. When the province downloaded those highways on to municipalities—done by the Tories, by the way, Mr. Yakubuski—oh, excuse me, member for Renfrew—Nipissing whatever it is. I'm bad with ridings. I'm sorry. I don't mean that in a bad way. When the Conservatives downloaded those highways on to the municipality, like they did in Kapuskasing, municipalities were very ill-prepared to absorb the cost of maintaining the highways.

Here we are, some 12, 14 years later, after downloading that highway, and essentially what we've got is washboard through the town of Kapuskasing on the TransCanada Highway. So I think it speaks to the issue that the member is trying to raise, and that is, how do we find ways to adequately fund municipal roads and bridges as far as making sure that those major arteries and others are properly maintained?

What's happening in the town of Kapuskasing is that, quite frankly, it's a disgrace to this province. People drive through this country, they get to Kapuskasing, and the highway is so bad that literally you can take the asphalt off it to take the bumps out of it.

The member raises an important point; where we get the money to do that, I think is another debate. Should it be from the gas tax? That is an option. But is that an additional gas tax that you want to share with municipalities above the two cents per litre that municipalities now get for transit? It's very important that we don't touch the transit pot, because there's not enough of that to go around.

I don't know what the member wants, but I think that's why it needs to go to committee. Is he saying, "Let's take some of that money that we have now, in addition to the money that goes to transit, and add money to the municipalities in some kind of formula"? Is he saying that it's got to come out of general revenue?

We as New Democrats in the last election responded to that, because we said we would put in place—I think it was about \$70 million a year. I don't have my glasses, but I'm pretty sure.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Seventy million.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, \$70 million a year to those municipalities to be able to fix Highway 11 going through Kapuskasing or whatever needs to be done. We

also proposed, as New Democrats through Andrea Horwath—and I thought this was a brilliant idea—that we take the politics out of infrastructure funding and we announce multi-year funding for those communities so that communities across this province know by a set formula that they're going to get so much money a year for capital infrastructure from the province, they can then budget accordingly to do what they've got to do, and they can engage in discussion with the federal government to make that happen. Multi-year funding is another option.

I say to the member—I'm going to be very clear: I will vote in favour of this bill, but if in any way you want to get your claws into the money that's going to the transit of these municipalities that now get it, we will not support this at third reading. We need an amendment that clearly says how we deal with the municipal infrastructure problem that's real in communities outside of those that are affected that are now getting the gas tax. If we can find a way to ensure that transit funding is made secure and we find a way to deal with how we fund municipalities for infrastructure who don't have transit, then I think we can go forward. But I tell you now: support at second reading just to have the discussion at committee. If you're going after the municipal transit funding, we will not support you at third reading.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** My good friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke took a few minor liberties while he was presenting his bill. We listened very carefully here, very attentively, and I'm sure he will grant me equal latitude. Just to clarify for him, this is the seventh time that he's brought this bill forward since he's been elected—the seventh time.

The member referred to elected officials in his area, to use his own words, as going “hat-in-hand begging,” but the evidence speaks otherwise. Ontario's contribution to municipal roads and bridges since 2003 and not including gas tax for eastern Ontario—which does not include major metropolitan centres like Ottawa, Kingston and Peterborough, just areas like municipalities within the member's own home riding: a not-insignificant \$219.4 million. This is not cap-in-hand begging.

Not all municipalities have a municipal transit system, but Ontario has, through the years, and especially on the watch of our government, helped all municipalities to maintain their road and their bridge infrastructure. Municipalities that don't qualify, as the member accurately says, for the gas tax program are continuously eligible for many other funding programs, which the member conveniently omitted.

In 2011-12, the province will spend \$2.5 billion to design, repair and expand highways, roads and bridges all across Ontario, and this follows four consecutive years of record-setting investment. In southern highway construction, which includes the riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and many of the other municipalities similar to what the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke had described, this amount is \$1.36 billion, creating some 17,000 jobs.

Now, Speaker, he did venture a little bit into politics, so I'm sure he will grant me a little bit of leeway to do much the same. What is the difference between a Conservative and the rest of us? For the rest of us, sometimes we come up with an idea that doesn't work, needs refinement or can just plain simply be inappropriate for the purpose. For the rest of us, we look at the idea and we say, “Okay, we're either going to change it or we're going to dump it. That's the end of that.” But for this member and for a lot who think like him, they say, “Well, it didn't work. I guess it's because the ideology wasn't pure enough, so let's purify the ideology and try it again”—and in the case of this member, again and again and again and again and again and again and again. That's seven times. It is indeed seven times that he has tried an idea that is inappropriate, that doesn't work, that uses money designed to build transportation systems in large urban areas. And that's the whole point and purpose of it: to build transportation systems in large urban areas such as the member occupies when he comes to Queen's Park, when he can get on the TTC, when I can go home and get on the TTC, the GO train and MiWay, which used to be Mississauga Transit. This is one of the things that large urban areas have to have, and the gas tax for large urban areas is a sensible, equitable way of going about doing it.

Very clearly, the province of Ontario has never neglected—except when it was ruled by the Conservatives, but certainly under the term of our government, it has never neglected roads, bridges and other infrastructure in northern ridings and certainly in rural areas, and it is not now doing so.

For the member to push this, this would suggest to me that this might be an attempt to increase taxes. So I would say that I would be very, very sceptical. It would be the same party that supported using taxpayers' money to do something that city council in Toronto didn't want, which was to have a subway, which is the most expensive form of transit. Now they're suggesting taking the money that should be spent on urban transit that isn't a subway, such as they backed, and spending it in some other, amorphous way that doesn't really connect with mass transit in areas other than large urban areas.

**1600**

So let's go on a little bit. Whether this is an expression of antipathy toward residents of large urban areas, only the member can know, but I'd like to use the words of some of the people around him.

To quote from the Pembroke Observer, “Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke MPP John Yakabuski says he is pleased to see that several of the highway improvement projects that he has pressed the government on over the last four years have been approved, enhancing the quality of life for his constituents in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.”

Let's see. I'm looking at the most recent roads and bridges fund. The city of Pembroke received \$258,826. The town of Petawawa—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Can we have the member from Mississauga speak to the bill, please?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member is speaking to the bill.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Okay. Let's just continue, then. The town of Petawawa received \$414,097; the county of Renfrew, \$3,634,661; the town of Renfrew, \$148,484.

Speaker, let's just keep going. There's been more than \$2 million spent for the rehabilitation of the Madawaska River bridge on Highway 41—the member certainly drives over that; almost \$9 million for the rehabilitation of Highway 17 from Chalk River east; almost \$8 million for the rehabilitation of Barry's Bay to Arbor Vitae Road on Highway 60; and more than \$18 million for the rehabilitation of Highway 17 around Renfrew.

Speaker, I know one of my other colleagues wants to speak to this, but I just want to put this in perspective by saying that I can't support an initiative that proposes to take funds dedicated to large urban transit systems and misuse them for purposes they weren't intended for, when the money already flows to do exactly the programs that the member has requested.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Anyone listening to the debate this afternoon who might wonder why the Liberal Party was shut out in rural Ontario six months ago in the provincial election campaign, having listened to the speech just given by the member for Mississauga—Streetsville, will now understand. His speech was essentially, I guess, a defence of the government's position on this issue through the last almost eight years now, since my colleague the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has been bringing this forward. His speech indicates that the government most likely is going to be voting against this bill yet again. It appears that the government members most likely will be whipped yet again, unfortunately, on a private member's bill, to vote down this bill.

But I want to commend the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. In fact, I've spoken on this issue in the Legislature—I've counted—six times in support of the principle that he's espousing today, which is that there should be a fair sharing of the gasoline tax. If the provincial government, indeed, is prepared to share two cents of the gasoline tax with municipalities, it should be prepared to share it with all municipalities, not just the ones that are in the cities—not just the cities, not just the ones that have transit systems. It's a matter of fairness, as the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke said, and he's absolutely right.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's an insult to rural Ontario.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My colleague the member for Halton said that it's an insult to rural Ontario, and I would certainly draw that same conclusion.

Our rural municipalities have significant infrastructure needs. Now, the member for Mississauga—Streetsville

talked about the amount of money that has been expended through several joint infrastructure programs through the years, but at the present time, as far as I know, there is absolutely no provincial program to assist rural municipalities with their infrastructure needs. There needs to be one. There needs to be a program that allows for sustainable and predictable funding so that municipalities can plan. They all have the infrastructure needs of their communities listed.

Certainly, in my community, in the municipalities that I represent—in Centre Wellington, there's 100 bridges. Many of them are in a state of disrepair and need to be fixed. We have our list. We have our needs. Unfortunately, the government is unwilling to assist us in that respect to the extent that is needed.

In the municipality of the town of Erin, in the hamlet of Hillsburgh, there's a bridge that's been closed for some time called the Station Road bridge. I've been bringing that issue to the attention of Ministry of Natural Resources officials so that we can remove the provincial roadblocks and allow the municipality to move forward. Certainly, they would appreciate, and would in fact need, the support of the provincial government for that project and others. They need financial support.

Certainly, the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke has a good idea. Again, I commend him and salute him for his persistence. When you have a good idea around here, as you know, Mr. Speaker, if you continue to advocate for it, continue to build support, that's often how things actually get done in the end. I would commend the member.

He pointed out that it was the federal Liberal government that initially allowed sharing of the federal gas tax, and from the very beginning, from the outset, the money was shared with municipalities large and small. The current federal government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper, has continued that policy, and again, I would commend that fact to the Liberal members to consider.

Present in the House we have a significant number of Liberal members, but unfortunately I don't see any who represent rural municipalities. Again, it would appear that the voice of rural Ontario, unfortunately, is not being heard in the government caucus. So we on this side of the House, representing our communities, will continue to advocate for rural Ontario. We will continue to urge the government to accept a policy of fairness in this respect. We call upon the government to support Bill 27 today, and I urge its passage at second reading.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Parkdale—High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure to rise and speak about transportation in a city—Toronto, my city—that has very little of it and not nearly enough. It's sad to listen to the wrangling between the two other parties, one that says there's enough money going to rural municipalities for roads, and the other that says more money should be taken away from transit in urban centres. The reality is that we need more money for rural roads and we need

more money for urban transportation. We need both, and we don't have enough for both. So we're fighting over these little crumbs with the gas tax.

Let me say, and let me say very clearly, where the New Democratic Party stands. Our stand, and we ran on this as part of our platform, is that 50% of the operating costs—just like they used to be, Mr. Speaker—should be paid for by the provincial government for transit systems. We also ran on this: \$17 million a year should go for roads and bridges, primarily in rural areas. So what do we need? We need both/and, not either/or, and not quibbling over a small amount of cash that's not nearly enough for either.

In Ontario, in transportation in urban centres, fares pay for 70% to 80% of transit costs. That's the highest in North America. In the United States, it's 50%. We're so far behind the curve. I took the TTC challenge in Toronto for a week. It was the hardest, longest week of my life, Mr. Speaker. If I did that every week in this job, it would add a day and a half to my work week. It never used to be like that. It didn't used to be like that. I grew up in a city that was the model for transit across North America, and now we're the model for dysfunctional transit across North America, in one generation. It's sad.

We need more money in transportation. We don't think that you take the money from this small pot and put it into roads. We don't have enough money as it is, but it's also not fair to the rural communities that we don't give them enough money to keep their roads in repair. This is the quandary of this bill; this is the problem. This is why, really, on third reading—you heard the member from Timmins—James Bay say it—there's no way we could support it in its current form.

On the other hand, we understand the need. We understand the problem. We understand why people start fighting over these little pots of money when there's not enough money to go around. So, as we in the New Democratic Party say so often, "A pox, my friends, on both your houses." You're wrong; they need money. You're wrong; we need money. Yes, we need money into roads and bridges; we need money into urban transportation. We don't have it in either category. So both—both—are failing. Under the current structure, both fail.

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So can we do better? We have done better. Could we do better? Absolutely. Adopt the NDP platform and, my goodness, we'd live, would we not—

*Interjection:* A little longer.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:**—a little longer, closer to utopia.

*Interjection:* Close.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Closer to utopia.

I mean, it's a very practical suggestion, something that has been done before in the province: 50% of the operating costs—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, come to order.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** You know it has been done before: 50% and \$70 million into roads and bridges. Oh, my goodness. How difficult is that? This is where we used to be.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This is where we used to be. Back to the future, I say.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister, you're being warned.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** At any rate, that's where we stand. It's pretty practical. It's pretty obvious that there's not enough money in both of these packages, and we don't think this is the way to get it into the transportation in the urban—also, we don't think they're right that there's enough money going to roads and bridges in rural communities. Of course there isn't.

I'm going to leave a couple of minutes for my friend from Essex to say his piece.

That's the voice of Toronto speaking, Mr. Speaker, and boy, do we need transportation in Toronto. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Oh my, Speaker, I don't know. Where do I start? I mean, there's just so much to share on all sides, but you know what? I'm just going to talk about one thing that's just not making sense to me. It didn't make sense to me last election when it was part of the Changebook—which wasn't changing much—that my friends were running on, the Conservatives. They want to take the gas tax money and they want to give that money to rural municipalities as well, but they also said, at the same time, that—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm hearing things from the background.

But they also said that somehow the urban municipalities are not going to lose any money. So urban municipalities are not going to lose any money, but the rural municipalities are going to get money from the gas tax. So is the gas tax going up? Is that what's happening here? Because the math does not add up.

There's always silence on the other part. I guess Conservatives really believe in raising gas taxes to make it even more expensive for people to drive. Perhaps that's what they want to do, and if so, I urge the member who sponsored this bill to say so, to say that they want to raise the gas tax in this instance. We don't want to do that, Speaker, but I guess the Conservative member from Renfrew—Nipissing wants to increase gas taxes so that urban municipalities like Ottawa and Toronto will continue to get the same kind of money and rural municipalities will get money as well.

But, Speaker, I think what's important is the kind of investment that our government has been making on an ongoing basis in rural infrastructure. For 2011-12 alone,



we are talking about spending \$2.5 billion to design, repair and expand highways, roads and bridges across Ontario, and this follows after years of investment that we've already made: \$1.36 billion in southern highway construction; \$618 million in northern highway construction. That has created about 17,000 jobs across the province.

I can go on and on about the amount of investments that we've been making in different communities: Durham region, \$35.7 million; eastern Ontario—that excludes Ottawa, Kingston and Peterborough—\$219.4 million in investment. This is not gas tax money; this is infrastructure money that is going into roads and bridges and rural infrastructure. In the Hamilton and Halton region, \$170 million; Kingston, \$7.2 million; London, \$20 million; Niagara region, \$34 million; northeastern Ontario, \$159 million; northwestern Ontario, \$37 million. And the list goes on and on. We have invested more in infrastructure, especially in rural Ontario, than any government. Since 2003, we have invested over \$70 billion in infrastructure—\$70 billion. That is unprecedented. That's almost \$10 billion a year.

Speaker, there is a very important reason that—we keep hearing stories from Quebec, for example, of concrete slabs falling off from highways. We don't hear such stories in Ontario. Have you noticed? There is a reason for it, because we have been investing in our infrastructure, and we will continue to do that. I think in this budget alone, which I hope the opposition parties will vote for, there is over \$30 billion over three years for infrastructure—\$30 billion. That's \$10 billion per year.

Now, what we're hearing from the opposition members is that they are going to nix that infrastructure investment, because they're going to vote against this budget and force an unnecessary and expensive election, which nobody wants. But most importantly, what I want to hear from the member who sponsored this bill is, is he planning to raise gas taxes? His math is not working in this instance, because he talks about giving money to rural municipalities but urban municipalities will get the same amount of money, and we haven't—

**Interjection:** He wants a carbon tax.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Or perhaps he wants a carbon tax. Maybe that's what he wants. We haven't heard that from him either as well. So he has got to come clean on whether he's planning to raise gas taxes in order to accommodate his scheme laid out in this Legislature. Otherwise he's not telling the full story to Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** In Bruce county, we have 148 bridges, 650 kilometres of roads—just think about that for a minute, just to service that—and in Grey county, 189 bridges and culverts and 877 kilometres of roads.

Now, this is a very unfair bill, the way it currently is, because what if any of these bridges went down and we could not bring the aggregates to the city or the food, the beef and the milk that you need in the city to feed your

families? No worry about rapid transit; that's no transit. We need money to ensure that we're going to be able to courier those goods back and forth, to ensure that our economy can be sound, that jobs will be created and not lost, like they often are under your government.

In the little village that I grew up in, Hepworth, Ontario, Canada, five million cars a year go through that intersection, and that's a minimal estimate. While we thoroughly open the gate to say, "Come and visit our beautiful part of the world, our national parks, our underwater diving, our Wiarton Willie, our Sauble Beach. We need you to help pay for those roads and those bridges that you travel over"—50,000 people a weekend to Sauble Beach—"and we welcome you again, but we want you to pay."

I'm quite pleased—and in fact I'm hoping I'm going to get some of my money back when I ride the Scarborough subway. We'll get some of our money back that way. All we're asking is for you folks to pay a little bit back to rural Ontario, because without us, you would not have the food in your cities. You would not have the aggregates in your cities.

Speaker, again, it's just an unfair act. I believe my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills said it's an affront to rural Ontario yet again. I find it interesting—Mr. Yakabuski from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

I only have one municipality in my whole riding that actually gets a piece of this tax. Our public transportation system is a road and a bridge, and a gravel road in many cases. I don't know that many of you have ever travelled in it. You should come up and try it some time; a great experience.

I truly believe that we have to change this, and we have to ensure that we're utilizing those dollars. If you hadn't wasted \$3 billion on the Mississauga gas plant, the Oakville gas plant and the eHealth boondoggle, we'd have tons of money to fix our bridges and our roads.

Speaker, it's a travesty. We need to do this; we need you. I'm hopeful, since you have a propensity to add to the OLG, that maybe Mr. Yakabuski's Lucky 7s will finally come up and he will get this bill through.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm really pleased, as the critic for infrastructure, to rise today to speak to the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke's bill. I think I may support it, simply on the premise that it is a Progressive Conservative tax-and-share-and-spend bill, which is essentially what it is. You're saying, "We want to tax, we want to share it and then we want to spend it." So I simply can't turn away this opportunity to support a Conservative tax-and-spend bill.

I do want to help address—I mean, they lay claim to being the rural champions. I come from a rural riding. I not only come from a rural riding, but spent 10 years in the construction industry building the culverts and bridges and sewers and tunnels and water mains they

speak of, and I understand how important it is to municipalities.

But the bill presupposes, and misses the mark, that rural ridings don't want public transit. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Essex, where we're just outside of Windsor, residents in Kingsville, Amherstburg, LaSalle, Belle River, Lakeshore, Essex, Puce, Emeryville, Maidstone—they all want access to public transit. They need it: seniors, students, those who can't afford the price of gas with the added Conservative-Liberal HST on top of it. They can't afford it.

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So I would like to see, Mr. Speaker, a balance be struck in this House, that we certainly address the needs of rural infrastructure but also address the fact that rural residents, those that many of the members along this way represent, also need public transportation. And I would love to hear a clarion call come from that side that actually advocates on that behalf.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'm pleased to support Bill 27, the Gasoline Tax Fairness for All Act. Basic fairness demands we support it. Everyone in Ontario who buys gas pays the provincial tax. Every driver pays it, from farmers to truck drivers to students to those of us who are fortunate enough to have a job and commute to work every day. We all pay gas tax. This province takes 14.7 cents out of every litre we buy. On a 50-litre fill-up, that's over \$7. To most of us, that \$7 really matters. With gas prices up around \$1.40 a litre, people are talking about the price of gas. We're told it's likely to stay high for some time, and it's likely to go even higher.

The McGuinty government already inflated the price of gas the day its HST came into effect, and the higher the price of gas, the more the McGuinty government collects in HST. And that's on top of the 14.7-cents-a-litre provincial gas tax.

The gas tax should benefit everyone, but it does not. Many municipalities are left out. In Perth-Wellington, the town of Minto is left out, the township of Mapleton is left out, and the township of Wellington North is left out. The township of Perth South is also left out. The government leaves them out because it says they don't have any mass transit systems. In fact, they do. Our mass transit systems are the roads and bridges we use every day. Many municipalities that aren't left out probably receive a lot less than they deserve according to their population and the gas tax that we pay.

It's interesting—all the statistics that come up across the floor—that we called the Minister of Finance for details on this and we were told to go to the Minister of Transportation, but they told us to go back to finance. So we went back to finance, but the minister's office still hasn't returned our calls.

**Interjection:** Imagine that.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Imagine that.

Maybe it's not surprising they don't want to share the facts, because the facts aren't on their side. Bill 27 would set things straight; it would set things right. It doesn't call for more spending. It only calls on the government to allocate gas tax revenue fairly, just as the federal government does.

If this bill is passed, no longer would our communities be penalized because they happen to be rural. Bill 27 would return to the people of Perth-Wellington the gas tax they already pay. It would stop sending it to Queen's Park, never to return.

If this government votes against Bill 27, it will once again be ignoring the people of rural and small-town Ontario. So I urge all members of all parties to do the right thing for all parts of Ontario. I urge them to support Bill 27, and I congratulate the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for bringing it forward.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I am pleased today to rise in support of my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke's Bill 27, the Gasoline Tax Fairness for All Act. I too have spoken to this bill previously, and so I'm hoping that the Lucky 7s do strike right for him and we can get this passed.

You know, it is not fair to rural Ontario. The urban members may get sick of that, but how many times have you heard it explained today? I have Lindsay in my Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock riding that has public transit and gets some gas tax money, and that is it. So my other municipalities which have small populations but lots of roads and lots of bridges—Haliburton county, the rest of the city of Kawartha Lakes, the three sections of Peterborough county that I have, Brock township, which has a ton of tributaries going into Lake Simcoe, so you know how many bridges and roads that takes—they're in need of infrastructure repair. Rural Ontario, as spoken by my colleague, does deliver a ton of stuff to urban Ontario, so rural Ontario needs to have its fair share of gas tax money to support urban Ontario's needs. That's the way it is. A strong rural Ontario makes a strong urban Ontario.

So you get people frustrated certainly in rural Ontario because they see this unfair portion of the government's money going to them, and rightly so. If that is not reflected when the members—in the last election, yes, you heard that loud and clear: Rural Ontario's not being treated fairly, not only in their roads, but you're shoving wind turbines down their throats, and now you're taking the horse racing industry away from them and all those jobs.

So, yes, we are angry in rural Ontario. We want a fair portion. We contribute to this province. This government has refused to listen to the voices of rural Ontario, which, as I keep reminding them, they need to listen to, because we're important to the rest of the province. We make them stronger.



I appreciate the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke yet again bringing forward this bill, and I would hope that the present Liberal government would support it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I won't name the members, but thanks to all the members for responding to my bill.

I want to touch a little bit on the member for Parkdale–High Park, who talked about where the money's going to come from and how it's going to be divided. We're not calling for—we can't call for new spending in a bill, as the member for Ottawa Centre should know. We can't call for new taxes. But it is up to government to figure out how they're going to spend. They're spending \$126 billion in next year's budget. It's up to them to figure out how to spend the money. If they hadn't spent—how much of the \$750 million that they've given to Ornge has been wasted? What about the \$1 billion wasted down the drain at eHealth? How about the \$1-billion suit for windmills that's coming up? Or the \$300-million suit for the Mississauga power plant that most experts agree—

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order from the member for Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, can we please remind the member that this is about the bill put forth—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, go ahead.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The \$1 billion that they're going to spend on the Mississauga gas plant for the cancellation—and how much are they going to spend on the Oakville gas plant? This is a government that is out of control—out of control—wasting billions of dollars every year.

But we're not going to stop. People in rural Ontario have made this an absolute priority. The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus continues to say that this is one of their number one priorities, a fair share of gas tax revenue for rural communities. They scoff at it over on the Liberal side. They've been shut out of rural Ontario, and they will continue to be shut out of rural Ontario. But I thought that maybe in a minority Parliament, maybe they'd get the message that the people in rural Ontario have had enough. They're not going to take the fact that you dump on them all the time and do nothing to help them. It's time you treated them fairly.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Sit down, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

## CONDOMINIUM DISPUTE RESOLUTION

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 25, standing in the name of Ms. Damerla.

Ms. Damerla has moved private member's notice of motion number 15. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (BRAKE PAD STANDARDS), 2012

### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (NORMES RELATIVES AUX PLAQUETTES DE FREIN)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mrs. Sandals has moved second reading of Bill 51. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the committee of—the member from Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I would like to have the bill referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Agreed? Agreed.

## GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2012

### LOI DE 2012 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill 27. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

The ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1630 to 1635.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would all members take their seats?

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing and be counted by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Bailey, Robert	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Bisson, Gilles	McNaughton, Monte	Thompson, Lisa M.
Chudleigh, Ted	Natyshak, Taras	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	Nicholls, Rick	Wilson, Jim
Forster, Cindy	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Klees, Frank	Pettapiece, Randy	

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Colle, Mike  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Delaney, Bob

Dickson, Joe  
Duguid, Brad  
Hoskins, Eric  
Jaczek, Helena  
Kwinter, Monte  
Leal, Jeff  
MacCharles, Tracy  
Mangat, Amrit  
McNeely, Phil  
Milloy, John  
Mori, Reza

Murray, Glen R.  
Naqvi, Yasir  
Piruzza, Teresa  
Qadri, Shafiq  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Wong, Soo  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please. I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negated.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Bradley has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed?

This House stands adjourned until April 16, 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1638.*

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):**

The ayes are 20; the nays are 33.



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craiton, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham—Kent—Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward—Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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COMITÉ PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Grant Crack, Kim Craiton  
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris  
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak  
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue  
Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Teresa Piruzza  
Bob Delaney, Victor Fedeli  
Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton  
Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza  
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: David Zimmer  
Sarah Campbell, Michael Coteau  
Joe Dickson, Rosario Marchese  
David Orazietti, Laurie Scott  
Todd Smith, Jeff Yurek  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely  
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Bill Mauro, Jim McDonell  
Phil McNeely, Randy Pettapiece  
Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor  
Lisa M. Thompson  
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la justice**

Chair / Présidente: Laura Albanese  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle  
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren  
Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan  
Shafiq Qaadri  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield  
Steve Clark, Garfield Dunlop  
Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod  
Jonah Schein  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norm Miller  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett  
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof  
Michael Coteau, Grant Crack  
Vic Dhillon, Randy Hillier  
Rod Jackson, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh  
Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch



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**Monday 16 April 2012**

**Lundi 16 avril 2012**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 16 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 16 avril 2012

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome back. It's now time to introduce guests.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** From the riding of York West, we have a business group visiting our city and our province. It is from the land they call Calabria, or the California of Europe. We are honoured today to have this business group. It's led by Mr. Pietro Caracciolo—they are sitting on the east lobby side, Speaker—and Oscar Caracciolo. We have Flavio Filosa, Salvatore Tarasi, Rocco Chiappetta, Antonio Pinto and, from our wonderful city of Toronto here but originally from Calabria, none other than Mr. Angelo Vinci, who is leading the delegation here. I'd like to welcome them in the House today, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We welcome our guests. Thank you for being here.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** I hope the whole House will join with me to welcome a good friend of mine, Sylvia Herr, visiting us from Berlin, Germany, today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome Ms. Hong Hueng, Mr. Roger Zhang, Mr. Jackson Zhang and Mr. Marshall Zhang. Mr. Marshall Zhang has done very fundamental research in the treatment of cystic fibrosis while he was a high school student. Today, he'll be receiving the ORION Leadership Award. Please join me in welcoming him.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I'd like to welcome the parents of page Georgia Koumantaros: her mother, Sovla Katsogianopoulos, and Demos Koumantaros.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce the father of one of my staff, Mr. Tony Myrans, who is an outstanding Ontario educator who has taught at Yale University, St. Andrew's College, worked for the national archives and mentors students in his retirement. It's a great honour to have him here in the House with us today.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm glad to introduce my daughter, the eldest one, Julie, who is 35 years old today. She's here in Toronto along with my grandson Nathaniel, who was at my apartment last night. We had great fun this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We welcome them as our guests.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PROVINCIAL DEBT

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Your recent budget was a surprisingly weak document when it came to confronting the debt crisis or the jobs crisis in the province of Ontario.

Let me tell you about the debt crisis. Your unsustainable spending over the last eight years has in fact put us on course to doubling Ontario's debt by next year. When the Premier came to office the debt was \$140 billion, and it will be \$280 billion next year. So what all the Premiers from John Sandfield Macdonald to Ernie Eves did, you're going to double it in your time in office. Doesn't this put us, Premier, at substantial risk if interest rates rise? Aren't we heading for a significant debt trap as a result of your unsustainable spending?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I appreciate the question from my honourable colleague. I'm sure that he took the opportunity, as did I last week, to meet with Ontarians, to hear from them and, in particular, to listen to them with respect to the proposals contained inside our budget.

I must say that Ontarians, broadly speaking, are very supportive of the budget that we put forward in this House. I would ask that my honourable colleague take the time to speak to his caucus—and I will quote from them in a moment, Speaker—and that at the same time, through his caucus, he listen to their constituents.

My honourable colleague would have us believe that the only choice is between voting for this budget and moving ahead with an election. In fact, that is the choice, and I believe that Ontarians want us to move forward with this budget. They think it strikes the right balance. It protects health care, it protects education, it invests in new jobs and it reins in spending.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** To the Premier: With due respect, that was not even close to answering the question I asked about, which was the pending doubling of the provincial debt and the vulnerability that you've set us up for for interest rate increases. In fact, Premier—this is from your own budget documents—a 1% increase in interest rates would result in an additional \$500 million in borrowing costs.

We know that interest rates are at generational lows. We've not seen interest rates like this in our lifetimes. Aren't you putting our house on a significant fault line by



not understanding that interest rate rises will cripple your economic plan?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague says that he's concerned about the debt level, and yet he's not prepared to support a budget that takes significant measures to restrain spending.

In fact, we cut spending by \$17.7 billion. We ended subsidies that we can no longer afford for horse racing and the ONTC. We closed our underutilized jails. We sold off government buildings and reduce office space by one million square feet—that's the equivalent of a 42-storey building. We slow down some capital projects, and we cancel others. We freeze compensation costs. That will save us some \$6 billion over three years. All of those speak to what I believe is our shared objective to bring spending increases down. So I say again to my honourable colleague, he still has time to reconsider.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker, only this Premier could believe that the solution to a debt crisis is to spend more money. Your deficit actually goes up, not down. Spending increases in 14 of your ministries, Premier.

Don Drummond, whom you commissioned to do a report, said on page 78, with respect to debt interest, "The danger here is obvious. As interest rates rise to more normal levels, so will the cost of servicing the growing debt, diverting dollars away from public programs." Despite the fact that interest rates are at record lows, Premier, you've failed to build in any kind of plan around that inevitable rise in interest rates. This single point will cost us \$500 million, sir. Isn't this a glaring fault line in your plan that you did not take into account the inevitable increase in interest rates and the cost of borrowing here in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague knows, in fact, that we've built in lots of prudence by way of contingencies and reserve funds. I think he understands that. But I think, Speaker, this is what it boils down to: You're not going to support our budget if you believe we've got to continue to protect the gains we've made in our schools and protect the gains we've made in health care and we've got to invest in jobs and we've got to rein in spending in a way that is responsible and prudent and allows us to bring a balanced approach. You're not going to support the budget if that is the bent that motivates you.

If your preference is your personal political interests as opposed to the greater public interest, Speaker, you're not going to support this budget. So again I say to my honourable colleague, there is still time for reflection on his part—reconsideration. It's a good budget, it's a sound budget and it deserves his support.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: I do find it disappointing that the Premier has not taken the time to

reflect on the expensive mess he's made of the finances in the province of Ontario. We fully expected a budget that would reduce spending, that would reduce the deficit, not increase it.

Premier, I ask you to look at page 174 of your budget papers. You say you're reducing spending. We looked through this: the health sector, up; education, up; post-secondary, up; children's and social services sectors, up; justice sector, up. They're increasing spending pretty well across the board, except in one area called "other programs," and all you find is a paltry \$1 billion in savings. That is less than 1% of spending in the province of Ontario. How can we take you seriously when you brought forward such a comatose budget that does not rein in the size and cost of government? Isn't it disappointing to the people of Ontario that you found less than 1% in savings?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, it's about choices, and I think choices have to be informed by the values that we share as Ontarians. Ontarians want us to protect the gains we've made in our schools. They want us to protect the gains we've made in our health care. They want us to move ahead with laying a new foundation for new growth and new jobs, and they want us to balance the budget. We've chosen the date of 2017-18 because we believe that is responsible.

My honourable colleague has a different perspective. He thinks that we should be making cuts to our schools. We don't support that. He thinks we should be making cuts to our health care. We don't support that. He thinks that we shouldn't find occasion to partner with the private sector to create new growth and new jobs, Speaker. We don't support that. That's a fundamental difference of opinion. I would encourage him once again to speak with his caucus, speak to his constituents and listen to what they have to say. They support our budget, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, this "other programs" spending category contains projects like amortization of infrastructure that has already been announced, cost-sharing agreements and pension liabilities. Most of these costs are in fact fixed costs.

I will point out to you, too, Premier, that the biggest area of spending increases—and there have been a lot of spending increases in the government—is not health, is not education, is not justice. It's in this "other programs" line; in fact, a spending increase of 9.6% on average each and every year. This is the area of fastest growth.

Premier, with all the fixed costs in that envelope and your penchant to ramp up spending in the "other programs" category, why should we give you any credit that you can find 1% in savings? I think you'll actually increase spending.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I'd recommend to my honourable colleague that he speak to members of the business community and economists and financial analysts to get their take on our budget. I would also—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's hard to listen, Speaker, if they're shouting. And I would recommend that they take that into account when they actually listen to their constituents and financial analysts and economists.

I would also recommend that they listen to the former Premier of Ontario and former Finance Minister Ernie Eves, who said, "I think they've taken a step in the right direction." I don't think there's any doubt about that. I'd recommend that they speak to Janet Ecker, the former Ontario finance minister and president of Toronto Financial Services Alliance, who says, "We strongly support" the government's "efforts to eliminate the deficit. It's an important step for Ontario's future economic growth...."

I could go on, Speaker, with countless quotations on behalf of people who have been associated with the party or the economy of Ontario who remain strongly supportive of our budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, we have spoken with the business community. Sadly, it's a shrinking business community under Dalton McGuinty—300,000 jobs fewer. Do you know what they actually wanted to see, just like average hard-working families wanted to see? They wanted to see a jobs plan in this budget, wanted to look forward to a stronger, more prosperous province of Ontario. But, Premier, in your entire document, no jobs plan, and you seem to be skipping blithely towards this debt trap ahead of us. Interest rates are at record lows. You did not plan for that. You identify a measly \$1 billion in savings in an "other programs" category that has been your highest rate of increase.

Sir, is this the best you can do? Can you only find 1% savings in the entire budget? Surely Ontario families could expect better than this milquetoast budget you've brought forward to the people of Ontario.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I will remind my honourable colleague once again that we are reducing spending by \$17.7 billion. In fact, we are committed to what has become known as an international golden rule, and that is for every dollar, Speaker, that we—actually, they call it the 80-20 rule. I'll quote Derek Burleton, who's deputy chief economist at TD Bank. He says, "I like the 80-20 rule. They're going to be cutting spending \$4 for every \$1 of revenue increases. I think it's turning into the golden rule internationally.... It seems to be fairly successful. So a good balance on that front.... The government has very prudent revenue assumptions incorporated in terms of economic growth."

So we're reducing spending by \$17.7 billion. We're increasing revenue, Speaker, by \$4 billion without raising taxes. We, in fact, commit to 170,000 jobs in Ontario. It's a balanced, thoughtful, strong budget, which is exactly what we need.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. As the Premier knows, New Democrats have been listen-

ing to everyday Ontarians about the budget. This weekend, I heard a lot more. Overwhelmingly, people tell us that this budget is unbalanced, it's unfair and it leaves people falling behind. Is the Premier still committed to working together to make the changes that will address these concerns?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I appreciate the question on the part of the NDP. I appreciate what I believe are sincere efforts on her part and on the part of her party to lend shape to our budget.

I want to register again my disappointment with the official opposition for abdicating their responsibility to work with this government on behalf of the people of Ontario. In the end, it's not about them, it's not about us; it's about the people of Ontario and our shared responsibility to find a way to work together.

I say to my honourable colleague the leader of the NDP that we have received a number of proposals from them. We're looking at those and considering those very carefully, Speaker, and we look forward to having further conversation as we move forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is a simple one: Does the Premier think that we should be ruling out new ideas that would pay for the services that families rely on to help balance the books in tough times?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we're open to new ideas, but my honourable colleague understands that I think we have all received some pretty direct marching orders from the people we are so privileged to represent, the good people of Ontario. One of those is that we've got to balance the budget, and the date that we have settled upon is 2017-18. I have yet to hear any disagreement on the part of the opposition with respect to that.

1050

The other clear marching order I believe we received from Ontarians is, we've got to rein in spending. We cannot allow spending to grow as quickly as it has in the past, and that marching order is given expression to in our budget.

So I say to my honourable colleague, we're open to new ideas but we've got to balance that budget and we've got to be very, very careful about any new spending.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, last year, while families were struggling with lost jobs and reducing wages, the 100 highest-paid CEOs whose companies are listed on the TSX made an average of \$8.38 million each. Now that's 189 times higher than the average Canadian made working full-time, and it's a 27% raise from the year before.

Would the Premier agree that people who are making more could actually do more to help Ontario in these tough times?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think we've all got to do our part. We've all got to make a contribution. I hope that most Ontarians would see themselves in this budget.



One of the things that my honourable colleague recommended time and time again—and we listened to her. She said that we should freeze any further corporate tax cuts at this point in time because we can't afford them. I think that was sensible advice, Speaker. I think it's in keeping with the values shared by Ontarians. I think it's in keeping with the values shared by the business community as well, so we have done exactly that.

### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. Families are facing tough times. In between shrinking paycheques, concerns about jobs and growing bills, they worry that this budget is going to leave them falling behind. But as they struggle with recession, they see that some people are doing very, very well, Speaker, taking home more in a day than a lot of people make in an entire year. They think it's time for a little more fairness in our tax system. Does the Premier agree?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, one of the things that you will see in our budget, for example, when it comes to helping families who are up against, through no fault of their own and looking for additional support—notwithstanding the advice of Don Drummond to freeze the Ontario child benefit, we have found a way to move forward with that. We're going to take it up from \$1,100 to \$1,310. But rather than go ahead with a \$200 increase all at once, we think that what's more affordable, what's more responsible, given the times, is that we divide that increase into two \$100 increments to come this year and the year after that, so that we get to our \$1,310 support level for families. So again, that's just one example of what we're doing to better support families who find themselves in need of support at this point in time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Our proposals make the budget a little more fair, and that's what Ontarians told us that they want.

Colin from Peterborough says, "Lower-income people are being asked to take the pain, but the affluent are not being asked to suffer just a little for the common good."

It's a matter of fairness, Speaker. When you're asking everyone else to tighten their belts, what I want to know from the Premier is, why not those at the very top?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, the—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** What about Sid from Oshawa?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Perhaps at some point we'll hear from Sid from Oshawa to see what he's got to say.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** You stole that from Dwight.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It's a symbiotic relationship. We feed each other.

But I say to my honourable colleague that she's put forward a number of proposals; we are considering those proposals. I must say, we have one overriding concern and that is that there is a cost associated with these proposals. My colleague the leader of the NDP is asking that we spend more. My colleague the leader of the official opposition is asking that we spend less. I think we've got

it just about right. I think it strikes the right balance and I think that most Ontarians as well see it that way.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, the Premier knows very well that New Democrat proposals will not add one red cent to the deficit, but what it would do is add some fairness to the budget and it would help everyday people in this province who are worried about their jobs, their health care and whether or not they can make ends meet.

So my question to the Premier: Does he stand with the 550,000 Ontarians who are looking for work or Ontarians making \$550,000 a year?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, you know, one of the things that the budget deliberately does is to put a big focus on jobs. In fact, we committed to 170,000 jobs. In part, that will come from our investment in \$35 billion worth of infrastructure over the course of the next three years. That means an average of 100,000 jobs every year.

Just to break that down a little bit for you: Our work on roads represents 26,000 jobs a year; our investment in schools—expansions, renovations, new construction—is 2,000 jobs a year; colleges and universities, 3,000 jobs a year; hospitals, which remain very important for us to continue to invest in, 26,000 jobs on average a year; modernizing the OLG, some 6,000 jobs all told. Then there are the jobs associated with the northern Ontario heritage fund, and the eastern Ontario and southwestern Ontario economic development funds. Those each will represent thousands of jobs, Speaker. So when it comes to jobs, our job speaks, I think, in a very eloquent way.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Over the weekend, Speaker, the Minister of Finance published a statement pertaining to my party's motivations in voting against his budget. My advice for that minister is to start doing his job properly for a change and let our leader, Tim Hudak, and 37 PC MPPs do ours.

My question is about the gross inaccuracy of the minister's statement, or rant, and "inaccuracy," Speaker, is the parliamentary term. The minister's view of what my party wants or doesn't want is wrong, and I think this demonstrates an extraordinary failure of leadership.

Speaker, to the minister: You're using the bully strategy, sir. I believe it's because of your complete and abject inability to offer Ontarians a budget that addresses the two main crises we face: no job strategy, no spending controls. Minister, will you admit that your own inadequacy as finance minister is what is motivating your attacks on my party?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I want to congratulate the member for Nepean—Carleton on being nominated this past weekend, Mr. Speaker. That speaks to motivation. You know what I found out after I made that public? It

turns out that there are more Tory nominations scheduled for the coming weeks. My goodness. They're coming out of the woodwork to nominate candidates. You know, instead of nominating candidates, you might want to take a page from our colleagues in the third party and sit down and negotiate reasonable changes to a budget and avoid an election that the people of Ontario do not want.

Our budget is the right plan. It's a good plan for the future. It creates jobs. It gets us back to balance, and we look forward to finding issues that we can work together on with the third party instead of nominating candidates as the Conservatives are now right across Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Minister, you say that when we met three times, all we did was revisit old ideas—not so. You say that when 35 lawyers came to our caucus room to offer a briefing on the budget, we stormed out angrily—not so. No one stormed out of any meeting, Minister. Your lawyers, who spoke only in legalese, answered questions for 30 minutes and the meeting ended.

You say my party wanted to adopt all 362 Drummond recommendations. We never said any such thing. That was your report, and you threw most of it out. Neither you nor your Premier are leaders; you are just name-callers. You don't want our ideas. You don't want theirs. You negotiate on a my-way-or-the-highway basis.

Why should any member of the Ontario public believe you know how to get Ontario out of a mess you yourselves created? In fact, it's your party that's spoiling for an election.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Finance?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, all this weekend we were negotiating with the third party to find issues that we could work to co-operatively. What were the Tories doing? They've announced a nomination in Kitchener-Conestoga for April 21, 12:30 to 2:30. They want an election, Mr. Speaker. They've announced a nomination in Cambridge for Mr. Leone, April 26. Mr. Speaker, they want an election. They announced a nomination in Mississauga South, 6 p.m. until 7 p.m., to nominate a candidate because they want an election.

We'll continue to work with the third party. We hope they'll rethink their very short-sighted plans to force Ontario back to an election. We want to work together to make this Legislature work, because that's what the people of Ontario want. I applaud the third party for being open—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

1100

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy. On Friday, this government appointed Murray Elston as head of the Ontario Distribution

Sector Panel. One of the key issues the panel will look at is the privatization of Ontario's local electrical utilities. Mr. Elston is former leader of the provincial Liberals and former vice-president of Bruce nuclear power, a private energy company. Why has this government appointed a panel headed by a former vice-president of a private electricity company to review the structure of electricity in Ontario?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We did appoint a panel on Friday to take a look at whether the distribution system could work better for families and businesses. It's a very simple mandate: Can it work more effectively and can it work at lower cost to save families and businesses money? I would have thought that the member from the third party would be interested in that.

And yes, we did ask Murray Elston to be part of it. We also asked a couple of other people to be part of it—somebody by the name of Floyd Laughren, who my friend might be aware of, and David McFadden, who has former connections with Her Majesty's opposition—a balanced approach to a question that's very important to families and businesses: Can we do the same for less money? Let's get the answer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, there is no question. Privatization will not save money; it will drive up hydro rates. The deregulation and partial privatization of the hydro system in this province has been a disaster from day one. Within five months of the market opening, it had to be shut down because the market couldn't regulate prices. This minister is on that collision course with privatization. I ask again, why is he going back to this whole question of privatizing local utilities and why did he put a privatizer at the head of the whole commission?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** No, we're not going to follow the failed Tory experiment where they privatized, undid that, went back again. We know what that did to power costs. But I would have thought that my friend from the NDP would have been interested in the answer, that he would have been interested in any suggestion that could make rates affordable for families and businesses—any suggestion to reduce costs.

What he forgot to mention, maybe, about Mr. Elston is that he was also on the board of one of our public entities, Hydro One; maybe he forgot that.

But you know, at the end of the day, families and businesses want us to look everywhere and take every strategy to make sure we have an effective system at the most cost-efficient means possible.

## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. Ontarians are acutely aware that the current global economic climate continues to be unstable. Right now is a critical time for Ontario to remain on track and globally competitive. We must strive hard to compete and grow in these turbulent times. At home, this growth means that Ontarians can



have the jobs and economic conditions to build a good life for themselves and their families. But we cannot lose sight that Ontario is in a stiff global competition. We are competing for investments; we are competing for new companies, new skills and, yes, new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, through you, could the minister please inform members of how our government is taking strong action to grow and strengthen our economy by fostering innovation and fostering key partnerships?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** There's no doubt that Ontario is on the right track when it comes to attracting investment and innovation in this province. Just last week, the government announced that we'll be partnering with IBM, the government of Canada and seven Ontario universities to establish the IBM research and development centre.

This will be the first time IBM has set up a virtual research collaboration centre anywhere in the world, and it's not by accident that they chose Ontario. IBM could have picked any location in the world for this \$210-million project, but they chose Ontario because of our competitive business environment and because IBM recognizes that this Premier's innovation agenda is making Ontario a research and innovation hotbed across the globe.

There's no question our economic plan is working. Our hard work is paying off. Ontario is emerging as a global innovation leader.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** The IBM announcement that the minister is referring to highlights that Ontario is taking the right steps to innovate and be sharply competitive in this challenging global economy. I'm proud to see companies like IBM working with us on important investments and partnerships, along with our universities and other levels of government, all with an eye on growing and strengthening Ontario's economy. This investment speaks volumes about how desirable Ontario is as a destination for growth and innovation.

It is great to talk about innovation, but people of my riding will want to know how creating a culture of innovation will bring tangible benefits such as good-paying jobs, especially to a technology hub like Ottawa. Speaker, through you, can the minister tell us how investments like this one create jobs in Ontario communities, especially in Ottawa?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This project will create 145 new highly skilled jobs and support cutting-edge research into critical challenges that face Ontario in the coming years. Along with expanding IBM software development labs in Markham and Ottawa and establishing the next-generation data centre in Barrie, this investment will continue to support job creation through collaborative research ventures focusing on data management and treatments in health care, water conservation and management to help reduce pollution, energy efficiency, and using technology to reduce gridlock.

The opposition do not support these kinds of investments. They just don't get the importance of investing in

innovation to build a strong economy and create jobs. IBM chose this location because they want to be where the action is when it comes to global innovation, and that's right here in the province of Ontario.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Minister of Health. The Auditor General pointed out that Ornge had logged some 60 public complaints and more than 500 staff concerns about patient care, delays in response times and communication problems. The result: Patients were put at risk, and we have yet to find out how many deaths will be attributed to those decisions at Ornge. Rather than seeing improvements, the front lines are telling us now that things are going from bad to worse. Ornge continues to ignore staffing requirements for paramedics and pilots and continues to employ unqualified staff in their communications area.

Would the minister tell us why, after a scathing auditor's report where he points out these issues, and after three months of her new management team, we continue to get these reports about the lack of staffing and under-qualified people at Ornge?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member opposite. There are big changes under way at Ornge. I'm very proud of the work of our new leadership team.

When issues came to my attention, I took speedy action. The member opposite agrees that I have taken aggressive action when it comes to getting Ornge back where it needs to be for the patients of this province. We've brought in new legislation. We have a new performance agreement. We have strong new leadership at Ornge. I ask the member opposite, will you support our legislation to increase transparency and oversight at Ornge?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Well, Speaker, here's the fact: We've looked at the new performance agreement, and nothing has changed when it comes to the actual performance requirements. Those same requirements were in the old agreement. It was the previous management at Ornge that intentionally lowered the staffing requirements to save money. Now we know that it was because they wanted to pay themselves some hefty salaries and some bonuses. The minister should know that those standards regarding the critical-care, advanced-care and primary care paramedics were there for a reason, so that they could respond appropriately to emergency calls. Those standards have not been restored.

I'd like to know from the minister: What has her new management team been doing for three months, if not to restore the qualifications of the paramedics who should be attending to those emergency calls? What have they been doing?

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**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, this is an issue that I know the new management at Ornge is very much focused on.

The member opposite claims to have read the new performance agreement—a lot has changed. Let me give you some examples. We will have a new patient advocate. We will have a complaint process that is publicly posted. We will have annual public surveys on performance. We will have improved reporting of emergency dispatch information by including cancelled and declined air and land ambulance calls. We will have a quality improvement committee, just like our hospitals do, that post an annual quality improvement plan. The new performance agreement gives the ministry the authority to conduct surprise audits and unannounced inspections. It leaves executive compensation to public performance improvement targets. It ties Ornge's funding to key performance indicators. It gives the government control over Ornge's corporate structure and sale of assets.

Speaker, I could go on, but I think the member opposite, if he actually read the new performance agreement, would understand we're making aggressive change.

### POWER PLANT

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy. Last week, news leaked out that the proponent of the cancelled Mississauga Greenfield South gas plant had been exploring a new location for a plant in Brampton in an already polluted area, next to a conservation area, and less than a kilometre away from schools and homes. Why is the minister allowing Eastern Power to probe new locations for a massive gas plant behind closed doors without consultations with local residents and all local councillors?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I thank the member for the question. We're not. It's not going there, and that's the answer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** This Liberal government's energy plan seems to change day to day, with flip-flops on gas plant locations based on electoral considerations, which cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. Instead of putting in place guidelines and consultation processes for gas plants to protect Ontarians, the McGuinty government continues to let power companies blindside the public and develop more gas plants in residential neighbourhoods.

We have confirmation that in the first week of April, Eastern Power consulted with a single councillor in Brampton on this power plant.

When will the government start making energy decisions based on the interests of Ontarians rather than the interests of private power companies and political gain?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Just to repeat, we're not supporting a gas plant going into Brampton, and we do appreciate the support of the NDP in our decision not to allow the Mississauga gas plant to proceed. We do appreciate their support, their continuing support. The Ontario Power Authority is having continuing discussions with

the project's proponents, and we have conducted a review of where gas plants should be sited to make sure—take a look all around North America—that any future siting of a gas plant will have very broad-based and long-lasting municipal and local support.

But just to repeat, and just to make sure that my colleague opposite is able to clearly appreciate the result: There is not a gas plant going into Brampton, and the Mississauga gas plant is not proceeding.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, last week a Suzuki Foundation report gave top marks to Ontario for its revolutionary Green Energy Act. The report noted that while some provinces are investing heavily in dirty forms of electricity like coal-fired generation, Ontario is leading the way by replacing dirty coal-fired generation with cleaner sources of power like wind, hydro and solar power. The report also notes that provinces like Alberta and Saskatchewan are going backwards in the fight against climate change, and Ontario is moving forward to a cleaner, brighter energy future, ensuring that our children and grandchildren have cleaner air to breathe.

Minister, in light of this report—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** —can you please share with this House the health—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You're supposed to look at the Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And you're also supposed to listen to the Speaker when he asks for order. Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I'd like to thank my colleague from Ottawa–Orléans for his long-standing commitment to cleaning up the air in the province of Ontario.

He's absolutely right. We made a choice. We made a choice to get out of coal because coal makes the air dirty and dirty air makes people sick. It's as simple as that. Just speak to Simone, a young woman suffering from asthma, who knows the benefit and value of clean air.

By getting out of coal, we're avoiding almost 700 premature deaths every year—that's important—we're avoiding 300,000 related illnesses every year. The Tories may not care about that, but Ontarians want to stay healthy. And we're avoiding taxpayers, families, businesses paying \$4 billion out of their tax pockets for the health care costs of dirty air.

Healthier people, more people live, reduced costs—that's the benefit of clean air.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** This is great news for Ontario. A vibrant economy and a clean environment go hand in hand. That is why our government is addressing climate change in a way that benefits our environment and protects our economy. The Conservatives have no plan to deal with climate change, federally or provincially.



In the last few years, we've worked hard and worked together to make Ontario an environmental leader. I understand that the federal government recently came out with their inventory report on our national greenhouse gas emission levels. Could the minister provide this House with the results of that report and, in particular, how Ontario ranked with respect to our greenhouse gas emission levels?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** To the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, I want them to know that I just happen to have a note. Ontario is making significant progress toward achieving greenhouse gas emission reductions. The federal government's National Inventory Report, which was released last Wednesday, showed that from 2005 to 2010, emissions in Ontario were reduced by 34 megatonnes, significantly more than any other province in the country. The report also highlighted that Ontario has reduced emissions in the electricity sector by 15 megatonnes—that's 43% since 2005.

Our government continues to make significant progress in several key areas. Our commitment to phase out Ontario's heavily polluting coal-fired electricity by the end of 2014 is on schedule. Since 2003, we've invested more than \$13.4 billion in public transit in Ontario, including over \$6 billion in GO Transit. And in April 2011, we released our Climate Ready report which outlines 37 actions over the next four years to help the province adapt to our changing climate.

#### SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board manages over \$1 billion in assets, yet some members of the board are compromising those assets by skirting school board rules or throwing them out entirely by ignoring accommodation reviews and disregarding staff reports.

On the weekend, desperate parents in Kanata requested you intervene after the school board ignored a late-fee accommodation review in their community. This review will impact two schools in one of the fastest-growing communities, Mr. MacLaren's riding, and that community is now in turmoil.

Minister, will you respond to their request in Kanata today to send a ministry official in to investigate the actions of some board trustees who've rejected due process?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to say that these are local decisions that need to be made. We respect our local trustees, we respect the role that they play, and we take their advice very seriously. There are local processes in place that allow us to examine these issues.

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I do want to say how proud I am of the investments that our government has made since 2003 in public education in the Ottawa area. Just listen to this: Since 2003, the two English school boards in Ottawa have received

over \$400 million in capital funding. Nineteen new schools have opened or are under construction. Speaker, I think that demonstrates the commitment that we have to public education in Ottawa and right across this province, and it's something that we're really proud of. We'll continue to move forward in that way.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm quite disappointed with the answer, and let me say why. Kanata's not the only community in turmoil based on the hijinks at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. You can ask trustee Mark Fisher, whom your friend in front of you knows quite well. Every other Ottawa MPP has a vested interest in the investigation of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board by ministry officials.

Last week, some trustees ignored other accommodation reviews, turned a blind eye to their facility utilization index, and flat out rejected staff recommendations in an eleventh-hour power play by the chair. This has wide-ranging implications. Let me tell you why.

In Dalton McGuinty's riding is the first school that needs to be rebuilt, at Elizabeth Park; it's now been bumped. In Mr. Chiarelli's riding, Severn elementary school has now been bumped.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** In McNeely's riding, Avalon school has now been bumped. In Meilleur's riding, the Viscount Alexander—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** —has now been bumped. This minister needs to respond—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Just a reminder for everyone that when I say thank you, that's usually the end. The second thing is, I remind all members again that we use members' riding names when we refer to them in this House, please.

Minister of Education for the answer.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to say from the outset how we know that these are very important local conversations, and they have an identified process that is available for communities involved if they want to raise issues of concern. It's appropriate that that process be followed, Speaker.

But I do want to say that I think there's a history lesson that we're getting from the other side of the House right now, and that is that the Progressive Conservative approach, when they had the opportunity to be responsible for education in this province, was to pit one community against another, to pit parents against teachers and to pit community against community.

I think it's very important upon us, Speaker, to take the politics out of this, to not pit communities one against another. That's the process we have put in place when it comes to accommodation review, and we respect the local role and responsibility. We respect the local voice. That's the process that we have, and it's the one that should be followed.

## FIRE SAFETY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. Speaker, I have introduced automatic sprinkler system legislation to protect vulnerable seniors living in all retirement homes. For years, unfortunately, this government has refused to act despite tragic and unnecessary deaths.

Last week, Ontario's fire chiefs released a report on fire safety and found that Ontario seniors' homes had the worst fire fatality record in North America, with 45 deaths since 1980. Speaker, Ontario fire chiefs are imploring the government to act before another death occurs. When will the safety of all seniors finally be put first?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'm pleased to take the question. I'm really pleased at the progress we've made. In fact, our government has done more for seniors than any other.

Through our Retirement Homes Act, the care that we provide to retirement home residents will now be regulated under the first-time provincial legislation in Ontario's history. Seniors in our retirement homes need to feel safe and secure. They need to know that there are safeguards in place to protect them. That's why the act is going to provide stronger protections for seniors living in retirement homes, including fire safety measures.

The act, when it's fully proclaimed, will require retirement homes to have specific emergency plans; conduct planned evacuations at least every two years; train all their staff in fire protection and safety, emergency plans and evacuation; and post in the home an explanation of the measures that are taken in case of fire. We want to provide information to residents about the staffing levels and whether the home has sprinklers in each room.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, today the fourth inquest into retirement home fire deaths begins. The issue is crystal clear. Automatic sprinklers save lives. There is no disputing this fact. The experts all agree. They don't want any more stalling by this government. The government is refusing to act, despite all the evidence that these are preventable deaths; it's simply shameful. Retirement homes are currently in the process of beginning to be inspected and regulated. This is the right time to act, not a year from now, Minister. No more studies; they've already proven that it should be done now.

Speaker, will this minister finally commit to taking action today, not a year from now? We don't want any more deaths in this province.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I thank the MPP for his question. It's a very, very important question. As the member knows, we have done preliminary consultation, which proved to be very successful by identifying key areas for improvement, such as inspections; training of owners, operators and staff; and installation of automatic sprinklers and other fire safety retrofits.

We have reviewed this report, and now we're moving forward. The Office of the Fire Marshal will now initiate

a technical consultation focusing on three main topics: annual inspection, staff training and additional retrofit requirements, including sprinklers. The association of fire chiefs is with us and very happy that we're moving forward in that direction.

## WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, I think we can all agree that families across this province want their loved ones to come home safe and sound after a hard day's work. We are all greatly saddened when we hear of an injury or a death in the workplace.

Part of your ministry's role is to investigate such incidents after they happen. But incidents that lead to these workplace tragedies are frequently preventable and/or avoidable. In light of that, when it comes to workplace safety, I feel that prevention is often one of the best policies.

Minister, what does your ministry do to help reduce and stop injuries and deaths before they occur? What are you doing to improve workplace safety awareness and reduce injuries and deaths?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge River for the question. We at the ministry agree that prevention is a very important tool in building better awareness of workplace hazards, and that's why our health and safety strategy takes a proactive approach to safety inspections.

As part of that strategy, my ministry conducts regular enforcement blitzes. The blitzes help workers and employers identify and correct workplace hazards before they occur. Last year, we conducted 11 blitzes. Our approach is working. In fact, Ontario is one of the safest places in Canada to work. The lost-time injury rate in this province was decreased by more than 30% since 2003.

But we're always striving to do better. That's why our government appointed a panel of industry experts to conduct a comprehensive review of Ontario's occupational health and safety system, and we're moving to implement the panel's recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Again, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, I'm encouraged to hear that the ministry has taken safety and prevention to heart and that you continue to be actively engaged in protecting workers in Ontario. These blitzes sounds like they're having an effect. I hope you intend to continue the inspection blitzes this year, and I'm curious how Ontarians can find out. I'm sure that businesses and employers would want to know ahead of time what kind of blitzes are scheduled to happen, and workers would want to know what inspectors found after they're over.

Minister, how do people in Ontario stay informed about these initiatives at their industries and workplaces? Does your ministry share this information with the public? If so, how and where?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Again, thank you to the honourable member for the question. To keep businesses and



employers informed, our ministry actually posts a schedule on our website and makes announcements prior to every blitz. Each announcement details what kind of workplaces inspectors will be looking at and what kind of hazards they'll be looking for. We also often provide basic fact sheets and posters that can be shared and displayed in the workplace for employees.

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Once the blitzes are completed, the results are regularly posted on our website. These results include the number of field visits made, the workplaces visited and the orders that we issue. We also offer a monthly e-newsletter that collects all the latest developments and news at the Ministry of Labour. These include blitz results and when they're published.

I invite members of the public and members of the House to visit the website, sign up for the newsletter and see the good work that my ministry does. Together with employers and workers, we're going to work to develop strong and healthy safety cultures across Ontario.

#### JOB CREATION

**Mr. Rob Leone:** This question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, there's an idea out there for an employment program to plant Jesuit pear trees. Do you know, Minister, what a Jesuit pear tree looks like, whether it's different than another tree, and how much you would pay someone to plant a Jesuit pear tree on your property?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I went to a Jesuit college. I have not heard of a Jesuit pear tree, but I am sure the member opposite will inform me in his follow-up question.

I have to say that my friend from Cambridge deserves high praise for one of the most original questions I have had or seen in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Let me just inform you, then, Minister: There's a plan to spend half a million dollars to train some students how to plant Jesuit pear trees—half a million dollars to teach students how to plant a tree. That's \$22,000 per student, roughly. We could spend that half a million dollars paying the college and university tuition for 100 students over the course of the year. I know this comes from the minister who—the Canadian Taxpayers Federation actually gave him a Teddy Waste Award for purchasing a million-dollar toilet.

So Minister, will you flush this wasteful idea down that million-dollar toilet?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I hope my friend from Cambridge will send me the details on that. I'll be glad to follow up and get back to him.

I'm actually waiting, one day, for a question about our 30% off tuition, which is the biggest investment I think in the modern history of Ontario in higher education and affordability. I look forward to working with my friend opposite. I would hope he would avoid an unbelievably

ridiculous election by working with us. Students need this money, and I think they understand that.

I think the member opposite would also appreciate, in the vein of his question, the extraordinary investments we're making in education in rural Ontario: agriculture, the great work that Brock and Guelph are doing on climate change adaptation with farmers, the number of jobs in the food and nutraceutical industries that have come out of our universities, some of them within walking distance of the member opposite's home—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** My question is to the Premier. Last week, city council in Toronto voted 40-2 to urge the Premier to ensure that the Union-Pearson air-rail link is clean, accessible and affordable for Toronto residents. Council asked the Premier to direct Metrolinx to add more stops to the line and to integrate it with light-rail transit in our city. Council has also reiterated their support for electrification and for affordable fares.

Will the Premier respect the near-unanimous request of Toronto city council?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I thank the member for the question. The ARL is certainly very important transit infrastructure for the city of Toronto. We're committed to having the air-rail link between Union Station and Pearson airport up and running by 2015, and we're on track to meeting that goal. In particular, by adding those number of stations—if we could afford it or if the city could afford it, because somebody has got to pay for it, and it hasn't been costed out, and the cost will be very, very significant—we would not be able to provide timely service, and we would not be ready for the Pan Am Games.

In terms of the electrification of that system, an issue which has been raised from time to time by the local member and by the federal member of Parliament, we had the opportunity, in Burlington, several days ago, to actually explain in detail to your federal member why this project is evolving the way it is and what a tremendous future it has. Particularly it will be eliminating millions of cars from our roads, and there will be an economic and environmental—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Speaker, the minister should not lecture us on start-and-stop transit plans.

The Premier and the Minister of Transportation have repeatedly stated that the will of Toronto council is supreme; it must be respected when it comes to local transit decisions. So it's very disappointing that they continue to ignore a strong and unified message from residents across the city about the air-rail link. The McGuinty government seems set on making the air-rail

link an exclusive service for business elites, excluding local families who are left only with diesel pollution to breathe. Why won't the Premier direct Metrolinx to build a link that is clean, that is affordable and accessible, and that meets the needs of both travellers and commuters?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** As the president and CEO of Metrolinx pointed out at that very important meeting that we attended, there is a long-term plan for the ARL which includes going, eventually, to four tracks.

But he consistently asked questions about the ARL, and he doesn't put it into any context, Mr. Speaker. The context is that in the city of Toronto, transit under construction at the present time is a Toronto-York-Spadina subway extension; the Eglinton crosstown; Union Station GO and subway stations; Pearson-Union air-rail link; GO Transit Georgetown rail corridor; York region Viva bus rapid transit; Brampton Züm bus system; Mississauga Transitway; and the rollout of Presto.

We are investing heavily in transit for the people of Toronto. We're proud of it. It's a good record, and we're going to do a lot more.

#### AMATEUR SPORT

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have question to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. This weekend, I was at the Ontario Women's Hockey Association provincial championships. There are some amazing athletes playing in Mississauga and Halton, and my niece was on the Ontario championship team. She was with the Etobicoke Dolphins AA pee wee provincial championship team. There are so many incredible athletes in Ontario. I want to know what you're doing for athletes in Ontario, Mr. Minister.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member for his passion in sport.

Speaker, I'm pleased to share with the House that this week our government, through the Ontario Sport Awards, is recognizing 33 of Ontario's top amateur athletes and coaches. The awards will honour outstanding achievements in the province's amateur sports, in categories such as equestrian, canoe, figure skating, badminton, water skiing, boxing, cycling and swimming.

In addition, I recently had the privilege of attending the 2012 Ontario Coaching Excellence Awards here in Toronto. I witnessed first-hand how this program, through the Ontario coaches' association, celebrates the dedication and commitment of exemplary individuals who inspire, innovate and share knowledge of sports with others.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Newmarket-Aurora on a point of order.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I would like to extend a special invitation to the Legislature to two students, both from Aurora: Victoria Spiterie, who is from the École secondaire catholique Renaissance, and Kevin Quach. Many of us will remember Kevin. He's a former player. Welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That is not a point of order, but we do welcome our guests, as always.

This House has no deferred votes. It stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would very much like to introduce some members of the co-op housing federation of Ontario who are with us today: Dale Reagan, Harvey Cooper, Diane Miles, Judy Shaw and Simone Swail. They're here out of interest in the piece of legislation that's going to be introduced momentarily. Thanks for joining us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We welcome our guests.

The member for Don Valley West.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** East.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome to the Ontario Legislative Assembly Gord Flanagan and his two daughters, Diane and Anne-Marie.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. We welcome them.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### OXFORD BUSINESSES

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to report the results of my recent Oxford business survey. I want to thank all the businesses who responded to share their concerns and experiences with me.

I want to start by commending the many Oxford businesses who make an effort to shop locally. On average, respondents made 63% of their purchases locally.

Our business people work hard to make their companies succeed, but the message in the responses was that this government is holding them back. Seventy-one per cent of the businesses said that there was more red tape today than there was four years ago. On average, they spend 215 hours a year filling out government forms and paperwork. That's time they could be spending on increasing productivity and with their customers.

Ninety-five per cent of respondents are very concerned about the deficit. But it's clear from their responses that postponing tax cuts will only increase our fiscal problems. When asked what they would do with money saved from tax reductions, 78% of respondents said that they would use it to expand and hire more people or invest in equipment and infrastructure. This is over three quarters of the businesses that said that they would put the money back into our economy.

Over 600,000 people are out of work in this province. I think the government needs to listen to these results and realize that reducing business taxes, as planned, will create jobs.



Again, I want to thank all the business people in Oxford who took the time to respond, and I hope the government will take the time to listen and act on their advice.

### HELEN FLANAGAN

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I rise today to pay tribute to Helen Flanagan, a local leader, community builder and a great friend of the Don Valley East community, who passed away on March 21, 2012. Helen was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. We're joined here today by Gord Flanagan, her husband, and daughters Diane and Anne-Marie.

Sadly, cancer took her from her family and from us too early. Helen fought cancer with courage and determination, qualities she demonstrated throughout her life and as a spirited community leader.

Born in India to missionary parents, Helen and her family planted their roots in the Don Mills community of Don Valley East, and for decades she dedicated her life to serving her community. Helen started her career as a nurse and eventually worked for members of both provincial and federal Parliament.

Helen contributed much to Don Valley East. A towering achievement of Helen's was her work as a driving force behind Willowdale Community Legal Services, an organization that provides legal assistance to low-income residents in the community. She was a past president of the Henry Farm Community Interest Association, an organization that advocates in the interests of tenants and homeowners in the Don Mills community. She was also a board member of the North York YMCA. Helen also spent countless years volunteering in grassroots organizations at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.

A cause near and dear to Helen and her beloved husband, Gord, was their work for fundraising for two hospitals in India.

Her home became a place where people in the community could feel welcome, and over the past years, she was known to take underprivileged young people into their home for extended stays. She was a mommy to many, as needed.

Mr. Speaker, we in Don Valley East will dearly miss our friend Helen Flanagan. I had the privilege of knowing her, and I know that she inspired many to become involved in building their communities.

It is my hope that her caring spirit will live on in the riding. She was an example to all Ontarians, and we will ever cherish her memory and the contributions she made to improve the lives of others, many of them in our community.

### HOCKEY

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It is my pleasure to congratulate today a novice rep team from my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

It came down to game 5 to decide the winners, and the Shouldice Designer Stone Shallow Lake novice rep team conquered the Ontario Minor Hockey Association Hodges division championship at the Walkerton Arena on Monday, March 26. The team played hard to the last second. Determination: They came back from behind three times before they finally took the lead in an exciting game that saw the Lakers' Aidan Christie seal the deal with an open-net goal with only three seconds left in the game. It was just exciting; it was unbelievable.

I would like to thank the dedicated fans and parents on the bench for keeping the kids in the game and focused on victory. The smiles on faces throughout the crowd on both teams were great to see.

I would also like to give special thanks to team sponsor Steve Shouldice and family, head coach Steve Gibson, manager Cathy Davidson, trainer Colleen Ouwendyk and assistant coach Dave Gibbons. The most important: I would like to recognize the young players on their well-deserved win: Josh Devries, Jessica Davidson, Ben Shouldice, Kalum McKinnon, Aidan Christie, Cole Deiter, Kirk Gibson, Jesse Cunningham, Kurt Indoe, Gavin Gibbons and Matthew Boulter.

Teamwork, hard work and dedication resulted in a successful and, most importantly, fun season. Congratulations to all. We look forward to many more in the future.

### HANNY HASSAN

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I am honoured to stand here today and share with everyone my thoughts on a fellow Londoner who has dedicated his life to serving our country.

This past weekend, I was invited to attend an Order of Canada ceremony recognizing the lifetime of incredible work accomplished by Mr. Hanny Hassan. Mr. Hassan is a man who has selflessly devoted himself to volunteerism and promoting understanding between cultures and religions over the past 40 years. Many of us know Mr. Hassan for his work in promoting cross-cultural and interfaith understanding, specifically within the Arab and Muslim communities.

Mr. Hassan's achievements are too numerous to note in this short statement; however, I do want to share a few of these accomplishments today.

Presently, Mr. Hassan serves on Western's board of governors and senate and is a member of the national executive and vice-chair of the Ontario panel of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. He is the past co-chair of the National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee and was president of the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and Citizenship from 1991 to 1995. From 1977 to 1988, Mr. Hassan was camp director of Camp Al-Mumineen, which continues to promote Islamic lifestyle experiences within the Canadian context for more than 125 Muslim youth.

I am so pleased that Mr. Hassan's lifetime activism and community engagement have been recognized by the

Order of Canada. On behalf of all Londoners, I want to congratulate Mr. Hassan and personally thank him for his outstanding efforts in London and for being a role model for all of us.

### PUNJABI FILMS

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I rise in the House today to talk about two wonderful events that have taken place in the last two weeks in Mississauga—one in my own riding—that have put Toronto on the international film map.

The first one was the Punjabi International Film Festival kickoff that took place at the Living Arts Centre in my riding. That was last Tuesday. That film festival is going to take place from May 18 to 21. It's going to attract Punjabi movies from across the world, made in different parts of the world, from Pakistan, from India and other parts, and it's going to showcase them right here in Toronto.

What's really amazing about this is the fact that I've just discovered that for a Punjabi movie to be successful, the success is determined by its box office launch not in India but right here in Toronto, because 50% of the revenues of Punjabi movies today come from outside of India. And that's what has put Toronto on the map.

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The other event that took place, again related to the Punjabi film industry, is that last Thursday, the Premier was part of an event where Dharmendra, one of the top movie stars from India—who happens to be Punjabi—came as the brand ambassador for something called PIFAA, which is, along the lines of IIFA, the Punjabi International Film Academy Awards. It's the first of its kind, and what's really special about it is, it's made right here in Canada.

### CURLING

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** A couple of weeks ago, I stood in this House and congratulated Team Glenn Howard as the successful winner of the Brier Canadian curling championships, and I'm very proud today to stand and announce—of course, many people know this—that Team Glenn Howard won the world championships on April 8 in Basel, Switzerland.

The team is made up of Glenn Howard, the skip; Wayne Middaugh, the vice; Brent Laing, the second; Craig Savill, the lead; and the spare, Scott Howard, who curled for his first time in a world title. He, of course, wasn't even around 25 years ago when Glenn won his first world title. Glenn has won four in that time frame and brings a lot of pride to Huronia, to Coldwater, to Penetanguishene, to Midland, to Elmvale—that whole area—

**Mr. Norm Miller:** To Muskoka.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** And to Muskoka. Apparently, there's someone from Muskoka on the team.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Wayne Middaugh.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Yeah, Wayne Middaugh actually golfs in Muskoka and lives in Victoria Harbour. But Miller's trying to take credit for it, of course.

It was a great tournament. I know there will be a lot of celebrations this summer on Glenn achieving the world championship in curling. We just want to say, on behalf of all the people in the Legislature here and from Muskoka and Simcoe county and Canada: Congratulations, Glenn, on a huge win. We're very, very proud of the whole Team Howard team.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, in the last few weeks, the Toronto District School Board has announced that it is laying off hundreds of teachers, education assistants and other staff. The reality is that this school board is facing the cumulative impact of funding starvation. This government, and the so-called education Premier, Dalton McGuinty, have not made the changes to the funding formula that Ontario needs, and that has meant schools closing, staff laid off, and children and parents paying the price.

Speaker, this Premier promised to reassess, reshape, the funding formula in 2010. It's 2012, and there is no sign on the horizon that that very necessary reassessment and fixing is going to happen. In fact, what we see is ongoing cutting of staffing, ongoing shifting of the burden on to children and parents. Who will make sure that our children are safe? How will teachers, already overextended, how will staff, already overextended, deal with those issues? They can't, Speaker, and at some point, problems will arise in our schools that will be impossible for the parents of this province to deal with.

The Premier must come to the funding formula, rework it and protect the children and parents of this province.

### MARSHALL ZHANG

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I rise here today to recognize the extraordinary and promising discovery by Marshall Zhang, a high school student at Bayview Secondary School in my riding of Richmond Hill. Marshall used a supercomputer system to find a new drug combination that doctors say shows potential in treating the genetic disorder cystic fibrosis.

Cystic fibrosis is a potentially fatal disease that is caused by genetic mutation. Many patients with cystic fibrosis have died in their teens, as there is presently no cure for it. Marshall's discovery entitled him to win top honours in many science competitions, including a first-place prize at the 2011 Sanofi-Aventis BioTalent Challenge, and he will receive the ORION Leadership Award today at the 2012 ORION Think Conference.

While Marshall's science project started yet another school project, his discovery has entitled him to a summer job at a research lab at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and has given hope to many



individuals and their families who have been affected by cystic fibrosis. Marshall's discovery is a great example of the innovative minds of our youth.

On behalf of all Ontarians, cystic fibrosis patients and residents of Richmond Hill, I would like to thank Marshall for his life-changing discovery and for making us proud.

#### ROTARY CLUB OF ORANGEVILLE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the Rotary Club of Orangeville, which is marking its 75th anniversary this year. Our community has been fortunate that the Rotary Club of Orangeville continues to make significant contributions to key projects that benefit the well-being of local families.

Rotarians remain committed to parks and recreation throughout Orangeville. A centrepiece project in town has been Rotary Park, a well-loved park for families and sports enthusiasts. Additions like Rotary Park's millennium skateboard park as well as this year's splash pad project at Fendley Park are only two examples of their contributions.

As a leader in fundraising, the club generously donates proceeds toward the purchase of needed equipment at the Headwaters Health Care Centre.

As an organization, Rotarians are keen to roll up their sleeves and get things done, often working with other organizations to both spearhead and support many local activities, including the annual Make Orangeville Shine event and hosting a Ribfest fundraiser.

The rotary club is preserving our community sports history through the creation of Orangeville's Sports Hall of Fame to celebrate those who have brought recognition to our community. The Hall of Fame recognizes not only athletes but coaches and officials whose contributions are essential.

I applaud every Rotary Club of Orangeville member for their "Service Above Self." It is an impressive record of achievement throughout their amazing 75 years. As a service club, the Rotary Club of Orangeville is a well-respected community organization that sets an outstanding example of volunteerism and activism. Thank you for your commitment to making our community stronger.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nepean-Carleton has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Education concerning school board accountability. This matter will be debated at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 18.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** My friends, in the Speaker's gallery today we have representatives of the

People's Republic of China: Mr. Lee Fang, consul general; Madame Mei Fang Zhang, deputy consul general; and Mrs. Jing Huy Wang, consul. Welcome to our assembly.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### NON-PROFIT HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES

#### STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES COOPÉRATIVES DE LOGEMENT SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Ms. Wynne moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of non-profit housing co-operatives and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés coopératives et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne les coopératives de logement sans but lucratif et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member for a short statement?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING COOPÉRATIVES DE LOGEMENT

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm very pleased to introduce proposed legislation that would, if passed, bring greater efficiency, accessibility and transparency to the co-op tenure dispute resolution process. Il est indéniable que le processus actuel consistant à résilier les conventions d'occupation pour les coopératives est complexe, onéreux et chronophage pour les fournisseurs de logement sans but lucratif et leurs membres.

1320

There's no question that the current process for terminating occupancy agreements for co-ops is complex, costly and time-consuming for these non-profit housing providers and their members. This is an important amendment which the co-operative housing federation has asked for to ensure that decisions related to evictions are fair to co-ops and their members, and I want to again

recognize the members of the co-op federation who are with us here today. Thank you for being here.

The Ontario region of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada is the main advocate of not-for-profit co-op members and boards in the province. Our government recognizes and appreciates the dedicated work of the co-operative housing federation. We share the federation's commitment to maintaining a strong co-operative housing sector.

Non-profit co-op housing has played a vital role in our affordable housing system for over 40 years. In Ontario, there are around 550 not-for-profit housing co-ops. These co-ops provide affordable housing for 44,000 households which represent about 125,000 Ontarians, including some of our most vulnerable citizens. This is an issue that has been important to our government for some time, and you may remember that Donna Cansfield, MPP for Etobicoke Centre, introduced a private member's bill to help improve the co-op housing dispute resolution system last spring. Regrettably, there was not enough time for Bill 198 to proceed to the final vote.

Mr. Speaker, currently the tenure dispute resolution process for co-op housing is governed by the Co-operative Corporations Act. Under this act, co-ops must go through a lengthy and oftentimes costly process in the courts to evict a resident. We're proposing to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, and the Co-operative Corporations Act to move most co-op tenure disputes from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board. The Landlord and Tenant Board is the body established under the Residential Tenancies Act to resolve rental housing disputes. Under the proposed legislation, co-ops would apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to resolve tenure disputes when they are based on grounds currently provided for under the Residential Tenancies Act, or the RTA.

The Landlord and Tenant Board is an independent agency. It provides Ontarians with timely access to specialized, expert and effective dispute resolution. With offices across the province, tenants and landlords have convenient access for resolving matters that profoundly affect their everyday lives.

Monsieur le Président, le transfert des expulsions des tribunaux à la Commission de la location immobilière rendra le processus de règlement des différends en matière d'occupation plus efficace, rentable et transparent, tant pour les conseils d'administration des coopératives que pour leurs membres.

If passed, this legislation would mean that co-op providers and members would have most of the same protections, benefits and responsibilities that are currently afforded to landlords and tenants facing tenure disputes under the Residential Tenancies Act. Evictions based on grounds outside the RTA would continue to be handled through the internal democratic co-op eviction process and the courts. This process needs to be retained because co-ops are governed democratically and have established bylaws which set out grounds for eviction that are not provided for under the RTA.

The proposed legislation would also amend the Co-operative Corporations Act in two important ways.

First, the Co-operative Corporations Act would be amended to clarify that when a co-op tenure dispute proceeds through the courts, it would be judged on the merits of the case. This would allow courts to decide whether an eviction was warranted based on the facts of the case, as well as assessing if the proper procedures had been followed by the co-op.

The second key amendment to the Co-operative Corporations Act would see the streamlining of the internal decision-making process of co-ops.

These amendments would promote the transparency of all decisions, would be less costly and would be less time-consuming for co-ops. They would also have the added benefit of allowing co-ops and their members access to mediation services to work out their differences. This could provide needed relief to the court system.

Our proposed legislation would offer co-op members involved in tenure disputes a process that's independent, transparent and affordable. Our proposed legislation is the result of significant consultation with the co-op housing sector over the past three years.

Notre gouvernement est pleinement conscient de l'importance du secteur des coopératives de logement. Ce secteur est un partenaire clé qui favorise la disponibilité de logements abordables et sûrs pour les familles de tout l'Ontario.

These are the people for whom our government is taking strong action today. Our proposal would help support co-op providers and the families and children who call co-ops their home.

Decent housing is more than a shelter. It provides stability, security and dignity. It plays a central role in reducing poverty. It creates a strong base from which to find a job, raise a family, and contribute to strengthening the Ontario economy.

Our government has made significant progress on our housing agenda. We're making a real difference in the lives of families and in the circumstances of Ontario's most vulnerable households.

Our government recognizes the need for affordable housing and its role in supporting the growth and health of communities across Ontario. That's why we developed the long-term affordable housing strategy, and it's the first of its kind in Ontario.

Our strategy supports our poverty reduction strategy and sets a strong foundation for a more efficient, accessible system for those who need safe, affordable housing. Our government supports the co-op housing sector. We plan to help it remain strong so that it can continue to provide a viable choice for Ontario families.

A housing sector that offers diversity for Ontario is not complete without a healthy co-op sector. That's why we're taking action in proposing this bill today. I urge all members to support this legislation. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Merci.



## VOLUNTEERS

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, this is National Volunteer Week. Each year during this special week, we pause to celebrate the enormous impact volunteers have on all our lives.

Five million strong, volunteers are found in every corner of the province. They coach our kids' teams, welcome newcomers, run food banks, defend the environment, support caregivers and knock on doors for worthy causes. They're big brothers and big sisters, advocates and mentors, board members and front-line workers. Some have served for decades; others put in time when they can.

It's especially encouraging to see new immigrants volunteering, building links with the larger community. We all benefit when newcomers bring their skills to Ontario's caring, not-for-profit organizations.

All of our selfless volunteers make a difference, and this is a time of year to show our appreciation. The annual Volunteer Service Award ceremonies are now in full swing in communities across the province. This year, more than 10,000 volunteers will receive the Trillium pin for continuous service to local organizations.

It's important to recognize and thank our volunteers, but we must also foster the seed of volunteerism in our youth. That's why this week we're launching the fifth ChangeTheWorld Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge. We aim to mobilize 25,000 high school students to do at least three hours of volunteer work over three weeks.

We want the experience to kick-start a lifelong commitment of volunteering among our young people. During National Volunteer Week, we'll also award the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers to encourage exceptional community service.

Another highlight will be the presentation of the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Awards for Voluntarism. This award honours individuals and organizations that have made extraordinary volunteer contributions in the spirit of the late Ms. Callwood.

Ontario has a strong and proud tradition of volunteering. Our government is working to renew and revitalize this cherished legacy. We understand that the only reward our volunteers seek is to know that they're making a difference. So I invite all members and all Ontarians to make an effort this week to tell our volunteer champions how and why their actions count. Let's extend a heartfelt thanks to those who do so much to make our communities better for everyone, every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Responses? The member for Leeds–Grenville.

## CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the Ontario PC critic for municipal affairs and housing, on behalf of our caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, I'm pleased to respond to the minister's statement

and the Non-Profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012.

Our party has long supported the idea of removing co-op housing disputes from the court system and putting them in the hands of the landlord and tenant act. It's long overdue that the minister would act on this initiative by making a very straightforward amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act.

The changes, I think we all know, would remove those 300 co-op dispute cases that are currently dealt with in the courts, to be dealt with much like many other residential disputes. I'm pleased that the co-ops federation of Ontario—I had the pleasure of meeting with you at your recent lobby day, and I think at that time I certainly gave you our feelings on the bill. As some of you know, I did speak it to as well during my opening address on Bill 19.

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For those who know how this place works, I was pleased to receive the compendium and the bill dutifully on my desk when I arrived, so I will endeavour to review the legislation and to sit down, if necessary, with the minister. But certainly I want to repeat that in the past our caucus has supported the concept, the intent and the spirit of the legislation.

I will say, however, that this is the second bill that the minister has made which I would describe, Speaker, with all due respect, as basically a housekeeping amendment when it comes to this legislation. I want to remind the House that, during Bill 19, I did indicate my eagerness and my hope that the minister would bring somewhat more substantive legislation on some of the real, serious housing issues that we have in the province. Really, I'm not trying to make a joke here; it's a very serious matter. We have a number of issues in the housing sector that I think collectively, in this minority Parliament, we could solve.

While I'm pleased that my friends have got their amendment, there are some other issues that I think, Speaker, with all due respect, we should be discussing.

## VOLUNTEERS

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** National Volunteer Week gives us a chance to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of volunteers in our daily lives. It is Canada's largest celebration of volunteers, volunteerism and civic participation, and I am proud to rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus to recognize the thousands of amazing volunteers across the province who give selflessly and volunteer to make a difference.

Volunteers do, in fact, make a huge difference in our communities. According to Stats Canada, in the survey of giving, volunteering and participating, in 2010, 47% of Canadians aged 15 and over gave their time to a group or an organization. That's more than 13.3 million people and equates to 2.1 billion hours or 1.1 million full-time jobs.

Recognizing this hard work is the essence of National Volunteer Week. Events such as tonight's Caledon Vol-

unteer and Citizen Achievement Awards honour those who have contributed above and beyond to our communities and give well-deserved credit to our volunteers.

When I was establishing my private member's bill, the Helping Volunteers Give Back Act, I had numerous opportunities to speak with many volunteers who are very giving of their time and talents. When I asked them why they volunteered, they offered many different reasons, but the one they all shared was to give back.

Communities benefit greatly by having an active volunteer sector. Volunteers are everywhere: in our schools, in our hospitals, in our arenas and many, many more places throughout our communities. They represent every walk of life: professional, student, senior, moms and dads, and friends and neighbours.

Volunteerism represents people working to improve the lives of others and, in doing so, enhancing their own. Volunteers are a positive force across all of Canada, and their work is often the cornerstone of a healthy community.

That is National Volunteer Week and why it is so important to highlight the benefits provided by volunteers and to thank them for all they do for us, for our families and our communities.

On behalf of myself and the PC caucus, I would like to thank all Ontario volunteers for their selfless dedication in everything they do for us on a daily basis.

### CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'll be responding to the minister's statement on the co-op dispute resolution bill.

We welcome this bill on housing and we welcome many more bills on housing that are of a positive nature. We have sent letters of support to your office, supporting the federation and their wish to actually move this to a dispute resolution process.

It has the potential to make it easier and less costly for both sides of the equation to get through the painful process of eviction disputes. It can save a co-op member money; it can save the federation money. I'm told that some of these cases can cost as much as \$50,000 in the court system. Lawyers make good money these days.

Still, it's hard to cheer a bill that took five years to come to fruition. In 2007, the Liberals made a promise to look at this issue and bring it forward, but it's here today.

It's also hard to cheer a bill when there are still so many outstanding issues around the housing crisis in this province. Too many families are stuck waiting for affordable housing—a 7.5% increase this year over last year—152,000 households.

Many people are paying rents they can't afford. I think it's one in five families that spend more than 50% of their income on rental housing, and many of them are forced to cut back on food and clothing and medication—400,000 at food banks here in the province of Ontario. And many of them are living, as I spoke about during Bill 19, in housing that is substandard, both in poorly repaired social housing and private housing.

We need to have many more co-ops here in the province of Ontario because these kinds of programs and projects actually build communities; they're not just a unit of housing. They create friends and social interactions, and they really do a good job building communities.

Cynics would say that this bill was introduced to distract Ontarians from the utter lack of action in the budget, but I'm not a cynic.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But you're not a cynic.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'm not a cynic—to distract the public from the many things that the government could be doing about affordable housing, the delays and the repair lag.

So it's hard to get excited about this bill when there's so much else that urgently needs to be done, but we are supporting our friends here from the co-op federation. We will review this bill carefully, but we won't stop pushing for comprehensive action to ensure that all Ontarians have safe, affordable housing in this province. Thank you very much.

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr. Michael Prue:** In response to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, volunteering is, in fact, part of our identity as Canadians. We value civic participation and embrace the spirit of community—all of the communities in which we collectively live. There are some 13 million people in this country who take time to volunteer. They volunteer in a whole wide range of things, from children's baseball teams to valley cleanups around the environment. They volunteer bringing Meals on Wheels to those who are shut in, and home-visiting programs to our elderly. They volunteer in so, so many ways, and they need to be saluted. They need to be held up for the wonderful people they are.

We need to remember in this Legislature, and indeed all the people of this province and of this country, the invaluable work they do. They are the glue that holds our communities together. They are the people who make a difference. Without them, we would live in a much poorer place. Remember, they don't do this for remuneration; they do this because they care so deeply and passionately about the place where they live. They are there to make sure that the needs of our communities are met, so that kids have a decent place to learn how to play baseball or hockey or soccer, so that old people are not left out, so that we all have a better place that we call this wonderful land of Canada, this wonderful province of Ontario.

### PETITIONS

#### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I think it's wonderful that the



member for Parry Sound–Muskoka is here while I’m delivering it.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary provincial highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

“Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

“Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

“Whereas the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka’s private member’s bill provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That private member’s Bill 9, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated provincially owned highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process.”

Speaker, I’m pleased to sign it and send it to the table with page Shaumik.

1340

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I have 4,000 signatures here today. I would have brought more, but they told me to split them up over several days. They’re from northern Ontario and as well from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north’s economy; and

“Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

“Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately.”

I fully agree, affix my signature and give it to page Talin.

#### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have a petition from residents of the great riding of York South–Weston, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

“Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

“Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Respectfully requests full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Sarah.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents. The issue is four 2.5-megawatt wind turbines being proposed by Leader Resources in the area of Port Granby in my riding. The two lead petitioners are Kulpreet Khurana as well as Gerry Mahoney. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the residents who have signed this petition have concerns regarding the direct and indirect impact on the well-being of inhabitants and the local environment in the vicinity of industrial wind turbines; and

“Whereas there are concerns regarding setbacks, health issues, the impact on the local environment and property values; and

“Whereas the residents who have signed are certainly in favour of renewable energy but are not reassured by the current level of research on the subject; and

“Whereas the wind turbine proposal is within proximity of the Port Granby crown land low-level radioactive waste site, [and] concerns have been raised about the compatibility of these two” environmentally sensitive “projects adjacent to each another;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to call for” an immediate “moratorium on industrial wind turbines and for the project in Clarington and other such projects to be halted.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to Brady, a page from my riding of Durham.

#### TOURISM

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I’m pleased to present the following petition:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas tourism is a vital contributor to the economy of northwestern Ontario, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars into the province’s economy from other provinces and the United States, unlike other regions in the province whose target demographic is people who already reside in Ontario;

“Whereas northwestern Ontario’s tourist economy has been under attack by government policies such as the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, the harmonized sales

tax (HST), the strong Canadian dollar and difficulties passing through the Canada/United States border; and

"Whereas studies have shown that tourism in the northwest nets significantly more money per stay than other regions of the province, in part due to visitors frequenting historical sites, parks and roadside attractions that they learn about through travel information centres;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To keep the travel information centres in Fort Frances, Kenora and Rainy River open permanently to ensure that northwestern Ontario maximizes the benefit of our tourist economy."

I'm pleased to support this petition.

### IMMIGRATION POLICY POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities."

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I most certainly support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to you via page Dia.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it's very important. They've sent some letters to the Minister of Energy, which he has not answered.

"Whereas the residents of Elgin-Middlesex-London are concerned about the sacrifice of 400 acres of prime agricultural land in the town of Belmont to the development of a solar farm despite the Green Energy Act's prohibition of building on such high-grade agricultural land;

"Whereas the company First Solar claims their use of such valuable land is justified under the older renewable energy framework that was in place when the company received its OPA contracts;

"Whereas the government has grandfathered the project into the new Green Energy Act, thereby allowing the company to circumvent any municipal opinion and review;

"Whereas the government has effectively allowed this project to use favourable aspects of two separate regulatory frameworks while avoiding aspects of those same frameworks that are meant to protect one of Ontario's most vital finite resources: its world-class agricultural land;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To put a moratorium on the solar development in Belmont until the province decides by which set of regulations First Solar is to abide."

I support this petition and affix my signature.

### SEWAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I rise to submit a petition on behalf of the members of Erie Road in the Harrow region of my riding of Essex.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has issued a provincial officer's order on the Earl Wright drain to the town of Essex. As a result, the town of Essex must construct an extension to the sanitary sewer. The process to extend the system must begin immediately; and

"Whereas the estimated cost [is] between \$15,000 to \$17,000 for property owners with 50-foot frontage and \$23,000 to \$27,500 for property owners with 100-foot frontage;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislative Assembly as follows:

"We, the citizens of Erie Road South ... in the town of Essex who have signed this petition, call on the Ontario provincial government to implement infrastructure funding through the Ministry of the Environment to help offset the cost of the newly extended sanitary sewer along Erie Road South in the town of Essex, thus making our properties and municipality more eco-friendly, as directed by the ministry. The total cost of the sewer extension is placed on the town of Essex, who in turn must pass on this considerable expense to the land-owners, leaving us, the undersigned, with an enormous burden in initial payout costs or debentured, with yearly taxes doubling."

I agree with this petition and I will submit it to the Clerk with page Safa.



## SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from my riding of York South–Weston.

“Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

“Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

“Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice.”

I agree with this petition. I will affix my signature and hand it over to page Sabrina.

1350

## HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Bill Walker:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the horse racing industry employs approximately 60,000 people, creates \$1.5 billion in wages and \$2 billion in recurring expenditures annually; and

“Whereas the partnership that was created between government and the horse breeding and racing industry has been a model arrangement and is heralded throughout North America, with 75% of revenues going to the provincial government to fund important programs like health care and education, 5% to the municipalities and only 20% goes back to the horse business; and

“Whereas the horse business is a significant source of revenue for the farming community and rural municipalities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Finance continue the revenue-sharing partnership with the horse racing industry for the benefit of Ontario’s agricultural and rural economies.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and I will send it with page Shaumik.

## SCHOOL CLOSURE

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I have another petition from members from the Woodslee community in my riding of Essex.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Windsor–Essex Catholic District School Board has begun a process to consider closing St. John the Evangelist school;

“Whereas St. John the Evangelist school is vital to the future well-being of the Woodslee hamlet and its students; and

“Whereas schools are not just buildings for learning; they are the heart of the community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To take whatever steps are necessary, including boundary adjustments, to keep open and maintain the long-term viability of St. John the Evangelist school.”

I support this petition, I have signed it and will submit it with page Manak.

## IMMIGRATION POLICY

## POLITIQUES D’IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, entitled “Respect for Diverse Communities.”

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

“Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

“Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

“We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

“That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

“That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

“Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

“That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity.”

I certainly support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to you via page Carley.

## SENIORS’ HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act protects tenants in dwellings, long-term-care homes and retire-

ment homes from sudden and unfair increases to their rent; and

"Whereas additional costs such as the provision of meals and other services are not subject to the said act; and

"Whereas there have been episodes of repeated, large and unjustified increases to the stated costs of meal provisioning in Cornwall and area; and

"Whereas residents do not have a say in the procurement and administration of meals and other services provided by the facility, nor can they opt out of such services when notified of an increase in charges, being thus committed to a 'take it or leave it' choice;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) To instruct the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to enact regulations ensuring fairness, protection and choice for residents of retirement homes and long-term-care facilities that provide any other necessary services such as, but not limited to, meals and personal assistance at extra cost to their residents;

"(2) To instruct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to undertake a comprehensive review of the administration of retirement homes and long-term-care facilities with respect to the provision of services other than lodging that involve an extra charge to residents."

I agree with the petition and I will be handing it off to page Andrew.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENT INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION DES LOYERS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 5, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just had to check the clock first: I have 10 minutes. I thought we might be down to 10 minutes by now.

The bill is a fine little bill. As my colleague from Welland said earlier on the introduction of a new bill relating to co-ops, what is being proposed here is fine. Who's going to say you don't want rent increases capped

at 2.5%? Everybody's going to agree that we need to keep them down, because we have to keep life affordable.

But having said that, what is this government not doing around the whole issue of tenants, tenants' rights, affordable housing and everything else? This government must know; this government did know. This government campaigned on trying to help tenants. We know that 13% of the tenants of this province live in poverty. We know that 20% of them pay more than 50% of their wages, of their income, each and every month to keep a roof over their head. That is not sustainable in the long term and eventually causes tenants to spend money on housing that they cannot spend on clothing or transportation or education or a hundred other things that most of us would take for granted.

We know that nearly 23,000 people spent nights in homeless shelters in the city of Toronto alone last year. We know that in the city of Toronto last year there were over one million visits to food banks. So it's all well and good to talk about a 2.5% increase, but the tenants' associations tell us that what this is going to result in is approximately a \$3-per-month savings for someone whose rent is \$1,000. So they're going to save \$3 over the 3% guideline that was there last year. I mean, \$3? Please. Let's not make this into anything bigger than what it is.

We know that 152,000 people are on the waiting list for affordable housing in the city of Toronto alone, and that number keeps going up year after year as this government builds virtually no affordable housing, even though they promised to. I remember back in 2003, some eight or nine long years ago, that wonderful election we had, and everybody was so full of promise and the Liberals were promising everything. In 2003, they promised to build 20,000 units of affordable housing each and every year. Eight and a half years later, they've made it up to almost 16,000. That's not per year; that's 16,000 in eight and a half years.

This is a crisis that's out there. It's a crisis not only for the people who are tenants; it's a crisis for people who are just looking for a decent place to live.

At the same time that they're promising 2.5%, they have left in place vacancy decontrol. The Liberals promise—and I love this quote from 2003, right from the Liberals' little red book. I quote them: "We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited rent increases on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone." Eight and a half years later, nothing has happened at all. We still have vacancy decontrol. We still have landlords jacking up the rent when tenants leave, and the new guy, the new person who comes in, loses it all. Nine years, no results: That's what this Liberal government is all about.

**1400**

So, today, they have a bill that says that we're going to cap it at 2.5%, and they expect applause from everyone. Well, I'm very sorry; you're not going to get applause from me. You have to do it. We're going to vote for it. But, look, this is a much bigger issue than what you're putting before us.



We have the Residential Tenancies Act, which is being changed somewhat today for co-ops—another good thing—but that same Residential Tenancies Act subsection 6(2) is still extant. What it says is that it exempts the owners of newer buildings from having to comply with the rent guidelines. Those newer buildings are now 20 years old. Surely the Residential Tenancies Act in that regard should be changed. Why should the tenants of those buildings be subject to guidelines above 2.5% when, in fact, the building is now 20 years old and is itself starting to show signs of wear and tear?

You've got the whole problem of proper state of repair. In the minister's own riding in the Thorncliffe Park area—she was there a couple of weeks ago, maybe a month ago now, to look at the sad state of repair in her own riding of the apartment buildings that are there. I'm very familiar with those because they are in the former borough of East York. They were in a pretty sad state of repair when I was mayor, but we did things. We had the authority and did things to make them better.

Those authorities are not there anymore. This government has not acted on them, and so you're going to go into apartments right across this province in very bad states of repair, with leaky roofs. You're going to go in there where elevators don't work. You're going to go in there with problems with bedbugs and cockroaches and mice and vermin infestation and holes in the walls. You're going to go in there with cupboards falling off, with refrigerators and stoves that don't work, with mould, with everything else. And nothing is happening around this issue, but the landlord can still raise the rent by 2.5%.

We think that there is a solution. We have suggested many times to this government that we license landlords. We have suggested that those bad landlords can be weeded out by use of a licence and that if they're not keeping proper repair, they don't have their licence renewed and they can't ask for guideline increases.

Surely people have the right to live in good and decent housing, and surely this government should be concerned about that. But all we see from this government is the same tired thing, because they are required to do it by law: Once a year, they come forward and set a rent guideline. That's all that happens around here. That's all they do. They don't do anything else that's meaningful.

They have left AGIs in place, AGIs which allow landlords to do repairs to a property. So if they do no repairs for 10 or 15 years, they can suddenly come along and say, "I had to put in a new roof. I had to put in new asphalt in the parking lot. I had to repair the elevator. I had to do X, Y and Z, which cost me money." Therefore, not only do you get the rent guideline, but you can get up to an additional 3% to make those repairs that should have been done each and every year. So you get tenants paying not 2.5%, but they phone my office, and I'm sure they phone everybody else's office in this entire Legislature, and say, "If it's only 2.5%, why is my rent going up 5.5%? All the landlord has done is repair a roof that was in bad need of repair for many years. Why is my rent going up like this?"

So, we need to limit this. We need to limit what landlords can do. They are supposed to keep their properties in a state of good repair. That's what the 2.5% increase is intended to do. A portion of that is to keep the property in good repair. Bad landlords aren't doing that. What they're doing is, they're coming along and every three years they're applying for a 9% increase—3%, 3%, 3%—because that's what the law allows, and then after those three years, they come and do it again. We think that this needs to be capped. We think there should be a minimum of one application every five years, and that it should not be 3%. It should be considerably less: 2% or even 1%.

The government has an opportunity here. The government has an opportunity that they're not doing. They have an opportunity to license landlords. They have an opportunity to allow municipalities to build housing. All it takes is a change to the zoning bylaw that the municipalities would have that, but they don't do it. They have an opportunity to spend some money on affordable housing, which they do not do. They have an opportunity to license landlords. They have all these opportunities, and yet all we see all the time is a little, tiny, minor bill to set the rate because they are required to do it.

Would that this government had some *chutzpah*. Would that this government had some desire to help tenants, particularly those who are living in poverty, to live in better housing and to have affordable housing available to the 152,000 people in Toronto alone who are on the waiting list and who are living in sometimes decrepit positions.

I ask the government to do more than what is contained in the body of this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I was listening to my colleague the member from Beaches–East York very attentively, and I'm very pleased that at the end he and his colleagues are going to support this bill, because it is a good bill. It's got good material and good intentions and will be good for the tenants in Ontario.

In my own particular riding, I have a lot of tenants. I'm not going to claim that I have the largest rental population, but let me tell you that I have an excellent mix of seniors renting, low-income people renting and single parents renting. I can tell you that I can vouch for some of the comments that the member has made, and that is why this bill addresses one very main problem: It is to give tenants in Ontario some four years of breathing space, if you will, where for four years they know what their rent is going to be, how much it can be increased, the maximum or the minimum. I have to commend the minister for bringing the bill forward.

It cannot go any lower than 1%. Why? To give the landlord, if you will, the opportunity to maintain the building and do repairs. Why the 2.5% maximum? So tenants know that their rent cannot go any higher than 2.5%. If they wish to make an arrangement between the two of them, so be it. The legislation does not prohibit

that. But the fact is, I think this protects tenants for the long run. It gives them an opportunity to concentrate on other things—running their lives, the education of their kids—instead of worrying about next month's rent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure exactly why we're debating this. But I remember the member from Beaches—East York—he means very well, and I support the idea, the concept that affordable housing is important for all Ontarians, to look forward to that in a time when “affordable housing” is almost like an oxymoron. Look, in Toronto you have to be a millionaire just to buy a house. So it isn't affordable. And then you look at how we're going to make living affordable for people. It's all to do with taxes and levels of service. So there's a larger debate here, subordinate to this.

In fact, if you look at the bill, there's really nothing in it. I think the people of Ontario should know that. It's about half a paragraph. It's actually about 25 lines. All it does is say that the guideline for a calendar year shall not be less than 1% or more than 2.5%. So there's really nothing in here, and we kind of agree with it. Why are we wasting the time when the economy of Ontario is heading toward a cliff and we're going there at precipitous speed and Dalton McGuinty and his team are doing nothing about it? That worries me, because all of what he's not doing is what's going to cost people more.

But there is a small line in here—pay attention to this now—that says, “The minister shall have the guideline for each calendar year published in the Ontario Gazette not later than August....” So it looks to me like the minister can actually set that, as long as she or he gazettes it.

I know the member from Beaches—East York, a compassionate person, an informed person and the last mayor of East York, I believe. So he knows of what he speaks, and I will be listening to his two-minute rebuttal to see if there is anything else.

The issue that the minister entered into today with respect to co-op dispute resolution, I think, is something. Why wasn't that put in here? They could have put those two bills together. Why are they wasting time here when the economy and jobs are really what we should be talking about?

1410

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The NDP have actions on tenants' rights. I just named some of the things we'd like to see implemented and obviously weren't dealt with at all in this bill. Strengthening rent control to a certain level was done here, but not to a level we'd like, obviously, because there's still some movement on repairs that owners do for their buildings and then put it on to the tenants and could increase it up to 5%.

We like to see: implement landlords' licensing; protect tenants from excessive utility charge increases and eliminate above-guideline increases for utility costs; extend protections for more tenants; ensure social hous-

ing residents have the same protection in terms of determination of their rent owing or changes in rent subsidies by allowing the Landlord and Tenant Board to review decisions under the social housing reform act; remove exemptions to compensation for tenants evicted because of landlords' own use of rental units; implement standard lease agreements, making leases clear and understandable for tenants and removing surprises or hidden clauses by implementing a standard-form lease agreement for renting, subletting, subleasing and utility charges; and improve access to justice for tenants.

What else needs to be done to make rent affordable and to protect tenants is closing loopholes in rent control. Currently, landlords are exploiting the fact that the rent control law doesn't apply to vacant units or newer units by imposing huge increases in rent to those units. The NDP will fight to stop this practice.

We also have to crack down on slum landlords and increase the supply of affordable housing to tens of thousands of Ontarians.

We have to make rent affordable.

We also have to reduce the cost of heating and hydro. This is a huge item. Some people's hydro—they have to pay that first and they can't pay their rent.

Make housing a human right.

Speaker, there's a long way to go. This bill barely touches on the many things that have to be implemented.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'm pleased to respond to the speech from my colleague in the New Democratic Party. I can't, Mr. Speaker, though, allow the occasion to pass without picking up on the comments from the member from Durham, who said, first of all, that he judged the bill by the length of the bill. That's a first for me. I think the importance of the bill has to do with its substance, not the number of words. He also said: At a time when the economy is in a delicate, precarious position, why are we dealing with this? I guess I ask him and his Conservative friends: Why, when the economy is in this situation where we need stability, are they trying to force an election on the people of Ontario? But, Mr. Speaker, that's an aside.

As I say, Bill 19 is an important bill which builds on our commitment to tenants, our passage of the Residential Tenancies Act in 2006. Mr. Speaker, the whole thrust of that bill and in this bill that has come forward and in measures in between has been to find that balance where we want to protect tenants and at the same time give landlords the flexibility and the resources they need to make sure that their rental accommodation can be kept up to date and they can address those needs as they go further.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud, coming from Waterloo region, with the work that has been done not only to protect renters in our area but also in terms of the issue of affordable housing which has been related by a number of members, including the member who just spoke on this issue. Waterloo region has been a true pioneer in



terms of reaching out to the private sector, particularly the non-profit private sector, and entering into partnerships with them so that they can build affordable housing.

A few days ago, Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of visiting Supportive Housing of Waterloo region. With only a few seconds left, I will just say that it is put together by a group that was involved with the Out of the Cold program and a way to provide supportive housing for those who are most in need. They did it through a very innovative partnership with the region, which I certainly applaud.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. We return to the member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues from York West, Durham, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and the Minister of Community and Social Services for their comments.

We in this province should be doing much more than what is contained in the body of this bill or what this government is doing. A country like Sweden, with about as many people living in that country as live in Ontario, 10 years ago embarked on building a million units of affordable housing. They have built 100,000 units of affordable housing each and every year for the last 10 years in Sweden, and they have met that goal. Can you imagine if this province seized the same initiative and built a million units of new, affordable housing instead of, over the last eight and a half or nine years, the Liberals building 16,000? There is a fundamental difference between the attitude of the Swedes and the attitude of this government.

We have people here living in poverty. We have people here living in absolute substandard housing with slum landlords, with vermin, with all of the things that one is going to find and the social conditions that go with them.

It is not enough for this government to simply control the rents, as the member from York West had to say. This government must be striving to do much more, and failure to do that is tantamount to throwing up your hands and saying, "I'm powerless; the economy is bad," or whatever they want to say. That is not the case.

Where other people have a will, they have shown that a way can be found forward. In the city of Toronto, they have shown that where there was a will to redevelop Regent Park, there's a way that can be found forward. This province, this government, has to find that same will. They will find a way.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before I call for further debate, I'll remind all members that questions and comments are to be referenced back to the member who had the floor, who was giving the speech as opposed to engaging in debate.

Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a pleasure and an early privilege to have the opportunity to speak on Bill 19, the one-paragraph bill. There is importance in the size of the

bill. When you look at this discussion today, I've made it very clear in my remarks, as did the other members—if I could trouble the young page for two glasses of water, please. Thank you very much. Pardon me.

The point is that we all agree, I believe substantially, that affordable housing is a laudable objective. I believe that all parties would wish that to be the case.

If you look at the fundamental cause for the dilemma that Ontario is in, I place the blame squarely at the feet of Dalton McGuinty, the Premier of Ontario. The reason I say that is, he has had eight years and everything he has touched has gone up in price. So the one thing you can be assured of is that the cost of rent is going to go up.

The rent review guideline is a method for keeping rent affordable. It has been published and is published each year. It's indexed generally to the CPI, the consumer price index. That gives the landlords the ability to pass on that much. However, when you look at the taxes on multiple residential—that's the classification for apartments: multi-residential. When you look at condos, you now have the condo fee. Both of those fees are going through the roof. They're not controlled by this function.

Furthermore, I would say that there's a simple economic argument here. If you look at what causes the consumer price index to go up or the cost of borrowing capital to go up, it's the amount of growth in the economy. When you have inflation, that kind of growth in the economy, you will always have higher interest than the rate of inflation. Interest right now is quite low. I believe it's federal policy, monetary policy, to keep interest low, because our whole economy is based on consumption—people buying homes. I think there's a bubble in the housing market right now. Certainly, it has been the case in the United States and other jurisdictions. I believe Canada is imminently waiting for that, and some of the economists have forecasted that. If you're looking at the affordability of your house today, which translates into affordability of accommodation, you would know, Mr. Speaker, that it's very much predicated on the cost of money: What's the mortgage rate? If interest goes up, the mortgage rates will go up, obviously—the cost of borrowing money.

You look at comments made during this debate that one in five people today are spending more than 50% of their income on housing or shelter.

1420

Now, to wrap around this, shelter and stability of residence is very important for people, but more important for children, whether it's for schooling—but for adults, to have a place to call home, to have the security of a roof over your head and a place to call home and a place to mail your future opportunities for employment, or to make phone calls, or to at least set up a home-based business or to get your feet under you in our economy. And I think there's nothing in here for small business in the budget that we've just seen. There's more red tape than ever. Now they're looking at home businesses in residential places possibly being taxed as commercial use.

I'm quite concerned that this debate doesn't go nearly deep enough with respect to the fundamental cause of making housing affordable. And if I look just recently, just for the sake of completing some remarks here, there's an article this past weekend in the Sun, on Dalton McGuinty's "Mythical Green Jobs." This is the article. I'd encourage people to read it. It says, "If you believe Ontario's Premier is creating 50,000 green jobs, you'll believe anything." Now, this is validated by—it says, "McCarter concluded: 'A majority of the jobs will be temporary. The (energy) ministry projected that of the 50,000 jobs, about 40,000 would be related to renewable energy,'" and be temporary. "Our review of this projection suggests 30,000, or 75% of these jobs, would be construction," which only last a few years. The "high proportion of short-term jobs was not"—here's the issue. Most of the jobs left at the solar will be somebody driving a lawnmower to cut the grass. These are not jobs.

Now, their second plan for jobs is to have a big casino in Toronto, strip clubs and pornography. This is such a weak and dismal vision for Ontario's future. It saddens me. They should be looking at developing the culture of this province, not tearing it apart. So I'm very disappointed. There's no vision, and this bill—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It does relate back to the bill, Bill 19. Today, the Minister of Municipal Affairs said—and I think our respondent, Mr. Clark, was quite fair about it. He said it's a good first step. He said the co-op housing dispute resolution process should belong to the Landlord and Tenant Act in a dispute resolution process. It's out of the courts and more affordable to resolve these disputes.

I believe that co-ops are a good form of home ownership. The reason I say that is that there's pride of ownership and there's commitment to the community. As I said, I think as the NDP member said today, it is about building communities. In Toronto right now, the whole housing thing, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is condominiums. What is happening, it's my understanding, is that many developers, rather than have apartments pay higher rent—you would know that. Multi-residential tax rates are higher than residential rates, and they're converting condos into rentals. Many entrepreneurs are buying floors in the condos rather than the whole building, then they're subletting those or letting those out, and the rate of tax is cheaper because it's a residential tax rate as opposed to a multi-res.

What is problematic there, of course, in affordable housing is the condominium fees. And there's nothing here that I see as any attempt to sort of—there was a discussion about the reserve fund issue as well as the board disclosure issue. What's an entitlement under the capital reserve fund? These are issues we should be talking about, because that's the new form of housing in Toronto. You'd have to be a millionaire—you don't need Dalton McGuinty's help to buy a house in Toronto if you're buying a home in Rosedale. He'd be asking you for a donation.

Bill 19, to me, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, sets out a rent guideline. We get that. What's next? I'm so disappointed in what's actually going on. There was a question again today asked of Ornge, and the minister ducked it; she sidestepped it. She was ignoring it. In that context, we've asked for a select committee. Everyone knows—

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Are you going to adjourn the debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** You pay attention. Everyone knows that we've asked for a select committee, and I hear some of the members are interested now. We're at the real substance of the debate now. The substance of my remarks now is this: We've asked for a select committee to review and subpoena people under oath for Ornge, and they've just ignored it. Even the House leader—I see him here on duty today. He's here because he pulls that trick. Premier McGuinty gives him notes and he reads them. But here's the way it works. Right now, as my sign of protest, I am moving adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. O'Toole has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1425 to 1455.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Will the members please take their seats?

Mr. O'Toole has moved the adjournment of the debate. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and be counted by the table staff.

Thank you very much. You may take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and be counted by the table staff.

Members may take their seats.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 23; the nays are 41.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

The member for Durham still has the floor.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I can only say on behalf of the opposition how disappointed we are. All we're asking for is a bit of civility and the fact that we really need to have a select committee examine this issue. The waste and lack of respect are unacceptable. It's on this matter that I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. O'Toole has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1458 to 1528.*



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Will the members please take their seats?

Mr. O'Toole has moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while they're counted by the table staff.

Take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table staff.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 21; the nays are 42.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

The member for Durham still has the floor, and I return to the member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I hope we've made it eminently clear that the reason for these procedural motions is that there is no respect. We want a select committee to resolve the issues around Ornge. The minister has never answered one question in the House, and Bill 19 allows us this privilege to do that. If there were any other motions where I could get them to pay attention, I would be here standing for the people of Ontario, because it's the right thing to do.

With that, I'm waiting for the NDP and the Liberals to comment on my remarks on Bill 19.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to the member from Durham. You know, his speech was an excellent speech, but he rudely interrupted himself twice. So it's rather difficult to remember what he had to say an hour and a half ago, but I do remember a couple of things that he talked about.

I do have to say, before I get to those, that his position on the select committee is a correct one. I am just not sure that the tactic is the right tactic. But I think the government does have an obligation to obey the order of the House that the minister said she would be bound by. Really, in a parliamentary democracy, one is only as good as one's word. When you promise to do and then don't do it, it reflects very badly, not only on the person who made the promise but on the entire Legislature, and I would ask the government to reconsider. Even though we in the NDP do not agree with the tactic, we do agree with the principle.

Now, as to what he had to say, he spoke at some length about this particular bill and about whether or not the bill was everything that it could be or should be. The comments that he made were accurate in that this is a very tiny bill, and one ought not to reflect, in the size of the bill, the importance of the bill. But surely this is not groundbreaking legislation; this is legislation that is required. It has to be brought forward.

**Interjection:** Housekeeping.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It's housekeeping legislation. It's done every year or every other year. When the rate has to be set, any government, any stripe, any time would have to bring forward such a bill. The fact that it is of such

short duration says that this is really the only thing that the government is interested in: setting that rate. The member quite rightly brought that out.

He also quite rightly brought out the government's lack of an action plan when it comes to the economy. I really have to agree with him on the whole issue of a casino. Is that the way the government is going to raise money in the future in this province? I would think it's a very poor economic strategy at best, and I would agree with him.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I have to say that perhaps the members of the House may have had enough speaking on the actual bill that is for debate. I can appreciate the member from Durham there. I mean, we had two votes in the House. We wasted one hour. We have the friendly member from Beaches–East York there addressing, again, this particular committee that they want in the House without speaking on the bill that's with us, and it's an important bill.

We're dealing with an extremely important bill with respect to tenants, how they are being governed and rent increases and whatever have you. So I think we should be concentrating on that. Evidently, the opposition says, "Oh, we've had enough. We know what to do with it." I hope that they will support it. I'm glad to see that the NDP will support it.

But I think the most important thing is to let the people out there, our tenants—how they feel with respect to this particular bill. The bill contains one very important clause, Speaker: that every four years, this will be reviewed. The rent will be reviewed. As it is being proposed now, we're saying, "Not less than 1%, not more than 2.5%." It is to give the opportunity to our tenants to plan, in the long run, their holidays, their kids, their vacation, their mortgage, their housing, their jobs, whatever they wish to do, without having to worry that the rent is going to go up by 6% and 8%, as it did years ago. People would be saying that it's going to go 6%, 8%, so we have to put something where people would feel comfortable, and this is what the bill does.

I think it's important to tell the people out there the reality of the content of this bill. It is good for the tenant—it is good for my tenants. I know it's good for all the tenants in Ontario, and I hope we can move it along to a public hearing and then come back and approve it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity today to respond to the comments made by member O'Toole, a very active member in this Legislature, someone who puts a lot of effort not only into his own riding but into the legislative debate around here.

Mr. Speaker, I know there were a lot of people who were concerned about the use of the bells today. I think it's been made fairly clear. The reason for the use of the bells is very clear. We are adamantly opposed to the fact that the government refuses to call a select committee to

look into the Ornge issue. We thought it was the will of the Legislature. We had a vote on that, and we thought we would have the commitment from the government to carry on with that.

They use the excuses that there's an OPP investigation, public accounts, the auditor and all this sort of thing, but the will of the House actually was to have a select committee. That's why we feel very disheartened that that never has taken place to this point, especially when you look at that it's almost three quarters of a billion dollars, we believe. It has been a very important amount of money to the citizens of the province of Ontario.

So I applaud my colleague for playing the leadership role with the bell movement, and I expect more in the future until we actually see that select committee. I think the citizens of Ontario deserve that. They deserve answers to the questions that are operating around that.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to say a few words, and thank my colleague for bringing it forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would also like to voice my opinion on Bill 19. It's unfortunate: I understand the reasoning behind the bells ringing also, but I did a lot of work in preparation for my time in the debate, and I'm now not going to have that opportunity. So it's a lot of time wasted, too, on that point.

There is a lot of serious work that needs to be done in this House. We have a lot of people in this province who look forward to affordable housing and safe housing, and when time is wasted on antics, I'm sorry, but I take offence at that. Like I said, I understand why they're doing it, but there is enough wasted time in this House that when we are here to work, we really do need to get to that work.

I'm sure I'll be voting in support of this bill, but it lacks a lot. We have so many safety concerns with houses. We have people who can't afford housing. A bachelor apartment in Hamilton is \$510 per se. A person on social assistance makes \$599. That's 85% of their income, and then you guys freeze social assistance. So we have big problems going on that bills like this aren't fixing. We should be putting our time to good use, bringing good bills forward and making sure that they count for real Ontarians who need us to be working on their behalf, not for the CEOs, because they're not struggling with these issues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** that concludes the time for questions and comments. I return to the member for Durham for his two minutes to reply.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to thank the member from Beaches East-York. I think he got it that the minister is lacking responsibility here. We all understand the reason for the procedural backlog. It's the refusal to honour a vote in this House calling for a select committee, which the Minister of Health herself agreed with, and now we're trying to make them at least keep their word. That's ultimately what this is. It's keeping your word.

**1540**

I want to thank the member from York West, but he said that I wasted an hour. I didn't waste an hour. This is democracy. You have to be patient with democracy. We're trying to make a point here. The point we're making is your arrogance and indifference to the mood of the opposition and the people of Ontario. You are on a breakaway. You're not listening to the heart and soul of Ontario. And we, I believe—our leader, Tim Hudak, and the team on this side—are.

The member from Simcoe North got it perfectly right when he said that I was an active member, but he said and reminded us all that the bells that were ringing, for those listening today, are actually the Ornge bells. When you hear those bells from now—it's like Pavlov. They remind you that it's actually Ornge, the Ornge helicopter waste, a billion dollars of waste. Every time you hear a bell now, you start salivating and you start to think, "Ornge helicopters." What a waste of money. Those Liberals are at it again. That's how I feel. I think of George Smitherman; he's on the payroll at Ryerson.

I would say, in all fairness, I know the members from the NDP, as we, support people of modest means and the need for affordable housing.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** And now the Liberals are laughing. They're only ones that are compassionate. It's not true. All members here want to make Ontario better. The only difference is, they're so arrogant they won't listen to us. Even the vote on HST off energy: As an example, we voted together for the people of Ontario; they voted against the people of Ontario. This bill is nothing but a shell. But remember, when bells ring, it's all about Ornge.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I am pleased today to be able to talk about the bill, G19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act. I understand that the intention behind the bill is to make rent more affordable and predictable by capping allowable annual rent increases charged by private landlords at 2.5%, down from previously inflated levels of more than 3%. While I think this bill can help a few Ontarians dealing with affordability in housing, it barely puts a dent in the housing crisis faced by so many in the province. We need to address the real issues behind the housing crisis to ensure that every person, every family, has the right to affordable housing that is safe and secure and free from excessive increases, and protect the rights to livable and well-repaired units.

As we all know, there are over 1.3 million tenants in households in Ontario and another 125,000 residents living in housing co-ops, which accounts for over one third of our province's population. The fact that over one third of Ontarians can't afford to purchase a house should be alarming for all of us and send a clear message that we need to be doing more. Thirteen per cent of households live in poverty in Ontario, and approximately 630,000 of those households are unable to afford shelter that meets



basic needs, basic levels of adequacy, sustainability, and affordability standards. According to 2006 census data, 45% of Ontario tenants represent more than 580,000 households paying 30% or more of their incomes to rent. To make matters worse, 20% of Ontario tenants representing more than 261,000 households pay more than 50% of their income to rent.

We know that the risks of homelessness increase dramatically when rental costs consume more than 50% of income. Please just ask one million Ontarians who were forced to use food banks over the past year alone. That's an extremely high number, and it's really shameful.

The numbers can't be ignored any longer. The people in this province can no longer be asked to live so precariously. We can't continue to ask more than one third of Ontarians to shoulder more and more of the housing burden while the dream of home ownership becomes a thing of the past. The reality is that tenants of this province earn, on average, less than half of the income compared to that of a homeowner. They, too, are suffering from this recession, and are doing so on less than most, and their hopes are dwindling quickly as the dream of homeownership is clearly no longer for all of us.

While I understand the noble intentions behind this bill, I find it's lacking in taking real steps to address the rental housing crisis. We are dealing with more than 152,000 low-income Ontarians on waiting lists for social housing as of January 1, 2011. Combined with a glaring lack of a social housing strategy for close to eight years, we are only beginning to touch upon the real issues.

This government made promises to the people of this province. They promised to deliver 20,000 units of affordable housing over the course of four years. What the people of this province actually got from that pledge was 2,000 units of affordable housing over the course of eight years. This province needs a long-term commitment to build affordable housing, not half-measures delivered over double the time frame to meet the basic need and right to safe and secure shelter.

This bill fails to address the reaction of social housing providers who feel that proposed rental caps will only make it harder for providers to obtain revenues to sufficiently manage ongoing, escalating maintenance costs. The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association has already written to the Premier, asserting that this bill will have "the unintended consequence of negatively impacting the sustainability and ongoing financial viability of both social and affordable housing projects."

Vacancy decontrol is one of several areas of the crisis that this bill does not account for. There are no provisions in this bill that address or prevent landlords from increasing any rent amounts they choose on a vacant unit. Again, back in 2003, the party opposite promised, "We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited rent increases on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone." That's the quote. My concern is that this bill provides a perfect opportunity to include the provision, yet fails to include it even now.

We also need to consider new builds in our conversations on rent regulation to allow for all private market rentals, regardless of when they were constructed. As it stands currently, subsection 6(2) of the Residential Tenancies Act exempts rent regulations for sitting tenants in newer buildings. Many of those have now been rented for more than 20 years. I and my fellow New Democrats say, enough with the loopholes and exemptions. Action is needed now to ensure that any form of rent regulation applies to all rental units, whether occupied or vacant.

Other major concerns that I and my caucus have with this bill is the lack of protection for tenants on maintenance and repairs to units. We support the vision of landlord licensing. This is a key component of ensuring repairs and maintenance are achieved without risk to the tenant. My colleagues Mr. Prue and Mr. Miller already laid out an NDP vision for action on tenant rights earlier today that was initially raised by Cheri DiNovo back in 2010.

I am unsure why this government refuses to take meaningful steps towards addressing the housing crisis. I really hope that they will be amenable to our suggestions to improve the lives and homes of more than one third of Ontarians who desperately need us to do more.

Affordability today is on the forefront for many Ontarians. Bills with respect to home heating and HST on home heating are making people find themselves in a crunch. Those who are on fixed incomes especially have challenges making life more affordable. One of the things that I know the party opposite is trying to do is a small step towards adjusting the inflation on rent increases, but it's not enough for those who are suffering on OW and ODSP. They can't afford even a 1% increase.

1550

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Or the working poor.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Or the working poor, for that matter. Increasing it by 1% or 2.5% is not going to help the working poor and those on OW and those on ODSP. We can't afford to allow these people to suffer anymore. They are already trying to make ends meet by going to food banks.

It's not acceptable that people have to choose between heating their homes, putting food on the table and having to pay their rent. Everyone deserves a home that they can afford, that's safe and is in good repair.

I urge this government, when we do send this to committee, to please take into account that we need to make some changes in order to address affordability issues for everyone and just not a small amount of people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I was very pleased and touched by the presentation by the member from London—Fanshawe. She concluded by saying that we hope that this particular piece of legislation will travel and we will see it at the various committee levels. Hopefully, this is the intent, actually, of the legislation: to debate it in the House and

move it forward. Let's go more publicly and let's have more input.

I have to say that the bill, Speaker, got here because of the consultation that has been done on this particular bill with all the stakeholders who have something to say on how tenants are being governed in Ontario. The results, in this bill, are because the minister, the government, have been listening to those who have made submissions. That is why we have proposed this particular piece of legislation. I think it's good.

I think it's good that we debate it, that we send it to committee, and then let's see what else can be brought forward by the opposition and other people out there on how we can make it any better.

Let me say this: I think the members on the other side know very well, in the past, what tenants were paying on a yearly basis. The fact is that we have taken into consideration those particular conditions that tenants were in, and we've said, "Okay, we want to give you a bit of space, that for four years you know what's coming. You can plan. Instead of worrying that the rent may be up 2%, 3%, 4%, 5%, you don't have to worry about it anymore because 2.5% is the top or 1% is the bottom." Now they can worry about their holidays, their education, their living style, their health, anything else. They don't have to worry anymore for four years.

Speaker, I thank you for your time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I want to stand up and talk about comments made by my colleague from the third party.

This is just a feel-good bill. It's another example of issues that aren't being addressed.

I see from a study from the city of Toronto where 49% of the residents, families, in Toronto are renters, and yet since 1996 only 5% of the units being constructed are rentals. We can see that this is a huge issue that has got to be addressed.

It's nice to say that they're going to look at controlling the rent, but they've done everything they could to make sure the real cost of renting has gone up. If you look at the cost of hydro and energy, the cost of property taxes, the HST—many cases where they talk out of two sides of their mouths, where they're looking at standing up in front of the public and saying, "We're looking at control of the rent." Well, rent hasn't been going up. If you look at rental units where these items are actually taken out of the rent, we're averaging 1.7% over the last five years. So I really don't see a problem. On the other hand, we're looking at rates of hydro increases around 80%.

If you really want to make housing affordable, you have to look at the supply and the other costs that not only renters are feeling, but everybody across the province of Ontario.

People are getting tired of the promises. I heard during the last election a promise to build more housing units, something that hasn't happened over the eight years this government has been in place. As my colleague from the third party has said, it was in their 2003 election promise.

But I guess we're getting used to these promises that aren't being upheld. I heard not too long ago a promise to do a select committee on Ornge if this House voted for it. We all know what happened there: another promise that's not being kept.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to compliment the member from London—Fanshawe. She hit on some very important points.

But speaking from where I'm from, Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, 21% of the people in my riding live below the poverty level, and 1%, 1.5% or 2% could be a killer to them. If this government really wants to do something, let's talk about lowering hydro rates. Let's talk about getting decent jobs or at least part-time jobs so they can put food on the table.

It's absolutely insane. This bill is like a two-line bill. You are not dealing with the problems. You're simply satisfying either the rent review board or the owners' association. That's all you're doing: another feather bill. It's not effective. It's not going to help anybody. If you really want to help people, I've got single moms that come into my office. They can't afford their hydro bill. They can't afford to put food on the table with three kids in tow. What do I tell them? There's like a two-year waiting list for housing. What do I tell these people? And these guys that are making over \$500,000 have got their nose out of joint because they might have to pay \$3,000 more a year.

Give me a break. Where's reality? What's wrong with some of the people in this province that have got all the money? Did they forget about where they came from? Did they forget about the people that live in their community? I think they have. It's about time this government took the bull by the horns and started fixing prices to help lower hydro and lower food costs and lower the things that are really going to help the people at that level. Because those people that don't eat properly and can't get proper medical attention end up being on the medical system, which costs us more and more every year, because they're not getting nutrition, they're not getting exercise and they haven't got jobs to put food on the table.

Why don't we get real around here and do some real good work and start helping those people?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Let me remind my colleagues what the purpose of today's debate is. The purpose of Bill 19 is about protecting the tenants in Ontario. Let's not go into this tangent about this and that. It is to ensure all tenants have accessible and affordable housing. The purpose of Bill 19 is to limit the annual rent increase in accordance with the guidelines which are linked to the consumer price index for Ontario.

Section 120 states very clearly that it will not be less than 1% and will cap at 2.5%, Mr. Speaker. I also want to remind my colleagues opposite that when the NDP was



in office in 1993, the average rent guideline increase was 4.9%. In 1994, it was 3.2%. And when the PCs were in office, the average rent increase was 3% in 1998, and in 2002 the rent increase was 3.9%.

So what are we doing here? We're doing it to protect the tenants, Mr. Speaker. The proposed changes, if passed, will provide some stability and affordability for all renters. I have thousands of renters in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt. In these uncertain economic times, we've got to do everything we can in this House to provide stability and affordability and make sure our renters have a stable rent, but more importantly, also help the landlord to maintain the rental unit. This is the right thing to do, because at the end of the day we're here to support our constituents and also make sure that the rent rate increase is within their means.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I return to the member for London—Fanshawe, who has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, Speaker. I do appreciate members opposite for their comments on my 10-minute speech on the bill.

Again, I think affordability is the theme of what we're talking about today, because we're trying to make life more affordable for everyday Ontarians, and one of the solutions that the Liberal government thinks is going to make an impact is capping rent increases at 2.5%. Again, I'll reiterate: That is a small part of the whole story that we have here in front of us with regard to affordability.

**1600**

Heat and hydro: I woke up last week and gas prices had gone up 10 cents. Affordability is going to touch everyone with regard to rent, food, gas and home heating. Everyday life has to be affordable, and part of that piece of the puzzle is again people who have jobs. The member opposite from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek touched on it. We need to make sure that we have some job creation. If we're going to give tax cuts to corporations, we need to have strings attached so that people are getting good, permanent jobs with benefits. The economy is going to be driven if people buy homes. So we want to have job creation so that people can feel secure and invest in a house. I really appreciate the fact that this is a small step toward affordability, but there are bigger, bigger issues when we talk about affordability.

So thank you for your comments. I hope that when this bill does go to committee, we look at the fact that it's not just about rent; it's about affordability overall, that we have to make sure it's coming out of our pockets.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before I call for further debate, I remind the House that we are debating Bill 19, and I would ask members to confine their comments to the bill. As well, the questions and comments obviously have to make reference to the bill and the speech that was just given.

Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my privilege to rise in the House to speak to Bill 19, and as I always try to do when

I come into this sacred House, I try to look at things with a balanced approach, an objective approach and of course give due diligence as a member of the official opposition and find ways to ensure that we're doing what's needed for the people of Ontario in the best way possible.

Although this bill, in my mind, probably has good intentions, it will do little for the most vulnerable people of Bruce and Grey counties, not to mention the people of Ontario, for that matter.

The member across the way just referenced that it's about protecting tenants, and like many things, it's not just a one-sided coin. What about the people who own rental housing? They need an ability to pay. They need an ability to make money with their businesses. They've had the HST imposed, and that added another 8%. So how do they recoup these costs? Like anything, we have to ensure that there's the ability for businesses to survive and be prosperous.

This bill again—a couple of paragraphs, a very insignificant bill in many respects—imposes a consequence without consulting the stakeholders. Now what does that sound like to you? To me it sounds like the horse racing industry that we've just witnessed recently: no discussion, no consultation. In that case, an agreement they signed in good faith as a cost-sharing agreement—and I would be remiss if I didn't suggest it brings in \$1.1 billion to the economy of Ontario—in the blink of an eye, without any consultation and any thought of consequence to the 60,000 jobs, they pulled it.

Similar to the budget we just had introduced in this very House, they missed the mark. They're talking about tweaking things. They're talking about frills.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order: the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I realize that you would like to stick to the issues. The last speaker, Mr. O'Toole, started talking about Ornge, and we're getting off topic again. We all stuck to topic over here. It was all about cost and affordability. You tell us to stick to the topic. Maybe they should stick to the topic, too. I think it's only fair.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Oh, absolutely. I would remind the member that we're discussing Bill 19, and I would encourage him to confine his comments to the bill.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'm happy to do so, Speaker. In fact, I'm trying to paint a bit of context to get to my next points, which are very relevant, I believe. Thank you for that clarification, Mr. Miller. It helps segue right into where I'm going.

As I said, it focuses on issues that really are wasting time. They talked about wasting time a little earlier. This is a bill that will have no significant impact. As my colleague from Leeds—Grenville suggested in his opening remarks on this bill, we need to be talking about significant and substantive issues like: What is the root of the problem why we don't have enough affordable housing? Could it be the cost of energy, which is drastically increasing under this government's watch? Could it be

about the waste of resources? There's \$3 billion that I could cite, but I won't digress into the specifics because I might be off topic. But \$3 billion: How many affordable housing units could we do if we had that money put into affordable housing?

We should be talking about substantive issues like jobs—600,000 unemployed people; the deficit—\$15.3 billion, which is going to go to \$30 billion if we don't soon do something; the debt is going to double to \$400 billion. Those are substantive issues. Talking about a 1% to 2.5% increase in a thing that was an anomaly—one year it went to 3.1%, and all of a sudden the Earth is falling in. What about this deficit that they doubled in less than eight years? We need to really get to the pragmatic part.

My colleague Mr. O'Toole spoke to this Bill 19. It gets back to the very core. My two boys at home—we talk a lot about politics, of course, and I'm trying to teach them the fundamentals of democracy. They said to me, "Dad, there was a vote a little while ago, wasn't there? You and the NDP voted"—I think it was 54-50. They suggested something that would have had a real, significant impact to the people of Ontario. Bill 4 would have removed the HST from home heating, the retail sales tax. But that party across the floor chose not to respect democracy and said, "No, we will not take it to committee." That would have impacted those people who are less fortunate, who don't have the ability to pay and who are on fixed incomes, like my mom. This bill is not going to have any significant impact, I believe.

I think my colleague from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek referenced a "feather bill." This is a feather bill, I believe; something that's not going to have significant impact to most people. I want to talk a little bit about that, because I believe that what's pushing up the cost of rent today are those unaffordable energy costs—a 46% increase: Who can afford a 46% increase? Whether you're the tenant or the owner, that's just unbelievable. We cannot dispute that under the Liberal government the cost of living in Ontario has shot up substantially. It's devastating to those who can least afford it, mostly low-income earners, seniors, most of whom occupy rental units or rely on local food banks.

Since 2003, it says that Ontarians have been slapped with a new tax—I want to just add: by the Liberal government, not all of us, because I don't want to be painted with that brush—a 13% HST and, zap, with shocking utility rates.

Where is the cap? If they had just thought about a cap on the budget and on their spending for the last eight years, we wouldn't have a \$15.3-billion deficit.

This bill is not going to do anything, really, to create more units. It's not going to do anything to create more affordable housing. It's not going to stop one less dispute. It has to look at both sides of the coin. You have to be able to have a fair approach to both sides of the issue. Those people that own these units as an investment, their way of earning money so that they can perhaps help those less fortunate, need an ability to

recoup their costs. A 1% to 2.5% increase is not realistic, and this is a bill that just doesn't deserve the time we're spending on it.

We need to get back to things like Ornge. That's a \$700-million fiasco that's happening in our midst today, and we've asked for a select committee and this government across the aisle will not allow us to even go to committee and have that select committee, although the minister in this House agreed that if that was the will—I believe the words were "the will" of the people—she would agree to go and appear before them.

Speaker, on that note, I can't do this anymore. I would call for an adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Walker has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be another 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1609 to 1639.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Will the members please take their seats?

Mr. Walker has moved the adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table staff.

Take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise now and be counted by the table staff.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 20; the nays are 35.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

I now return to the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, who still has the floor.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Speaker. I'll try to start off where I left off.

I've spoken to a number of people in my riding, landlords in particular, small landlords, people who are just trying to inch a day out, make a bit of money, trying to make a living. Instead of renovating their units, instead of investing in capital projects, they're struggling to cover the rising operational costs. Could I suggest that a 46% cost-of-electricity increase is unexpected?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I ask the House to come to order. I have to be able to hear the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

I return to the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** This is just primarily what we've been talking about. We try to raise an issue in the House of a substantive nature—Ornge, for example; the budget, for example—things that are going to make a difference to us. We talked about Ornge, and the minister herself said if it was the will of this House, she would speak about it. We voted. She has now reneged, just like the horse racing industry agreement that they've done.



Speaker, I cannot tolerate that they will not talk about the substantive things that are going to help our province and those people who need our help the most. Speaker, I call for an adjournment of this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Walker has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1642 to 1712.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Will the members please take their seats.

Mr. Walker has moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table staff.

Take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 18; the nays are 37.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

I believe the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound still has some time on the clock and he still has the floor.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Speaker.

As I started off with this, my concern is that we're talking about things that aren't substantive. We're not going to change what we need to do. We need to be talking about creating jobs, cutting expenses, cutting spending, reducing the deficit. This is tweaking around the edges, just like their budget, and I cannot support that. We need to be talking substantive. We need to be making selective choices. We need to be honouring our commitments and doing the right thing, the honourable thing, when we're in this House. We need to ensure to be talking about things that are going to make a difference in the lives of Ontarians—

**Interjections:** Ten, nine, eight, seven—

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Speaker, this bill is not what it's purported to be—

**Interjections:**—four, three, two, one.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That kind of counting down shows profound disrespect for the House, and I would ask members not to do it in the future.

I'm going to return to the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. He has an additional 10 seconds to wind up, if he chooses to use them.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Speaker. It's nice to have respect and civility in this House.

We're all here to do the right thing for Ontarians, and we need to ensure that we're talking about substantive issues. This bill is not enough. This is tweaking edges. We need to get back to the real things: the budget, reducing spending, creating jobs. Speaker, we cannot support this in its current fashion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's a pleasure to rise to discuss this issue. I have to say, Speaker, when I was first elected in 2006 to this Legislature, when I would go door to door talking to people in apartment buildings, people faced difficulties, but rent control was not at the top of their list. But increasingly, as the cost of living has gone up, as people have had to make do with salaries, wages, incomes that have stagnated, as people have been pushed hard by landlords who not only go to the limit on the guideline every opportunity they get but go beyond that, what I find amongst more and more tenants is the need for substantial protection.

This bill is going to be very small comfort to those tenants; very small comfort. Will it give them the support they need to contest an above-the-guideline increase before the rent and review tribunal? I don't see that, Speaker. Will this bill be part of a larger project to provide people with housing they can afford? I don't see that, Speaker. Will this bill deal with an earlier piece of legislation by this government that directed landlords to be able to put in individual meters for apartment use of electricity? I don't see that, Speaker, even though those tenants have no control over the building envelope, the quality of the technology put in their units. This bill will not address that.

So this bill will give very small comfort to tenants in this province, many of them seniors living on fixed income, many of them new Canadians waiting months and months and months—not just waiting; actively going out and looking for work and not finding it. Speaker, cold comfort, indeed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Again, I'm delighted to make some comments on Bill 19, as we were discussing Bill 19. The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, I believe, was the last speaker, and he was addressing somewhat Bill 19, but he deviated into affordable housing in general and housing and support.

For the benefit of the members, let me say what we have done in the last few years. We have provided repairs for new units for some 22,000 units. We've provided rent supplements for some 35,000 Ontarians, and we have prevented some 18,000 evictions with our own rent bank program. Speaker, we have managed to provide a \$1.2-billion agreement with the federal government. Thank goodness they came on board. We built some 4,500 units for affordable housing, and we have repaired over another 50,000 units.

Now, the bill itself that's under for debate is to provide some stability for tenants to let them know that their rent will not, for four years, go either lower than 1% or higher than 2.5%. With all due respect, I don't think they see this as an important issue for tenants, but it is for my tenants, because now they know that stability means, for four years, they can address other issues, either work, kids, recreation, buying a car, doing whatever they want

to do, without worrying about the rent going up next year or next month.

Now, this is fair, I think, for both. Tenants know that their rent is not going to go any higher than 2.5%, and landlords know that it's going to go down any more than 1%. I think it's fair, but I hope this will go to committee and we can have more input from the opposition.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Obviously today is a bit of a proud day for residents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. They've got their local Bill down here, a second Bill, if you will—stereo Bills, sometimes. He said he was going to come down here and fight. He was going to fight with respect. We've seen him in action this afternoon fighting for a select committee so we can get down to the bottom of what's been going on with yet again another Liberal scandal.

1720

I had an opportunity to get up to the member's riding last summer. He has quite a background. He's done just about everything, as a board member, a manager, a coordinator, an auctioneer, a master of ceremonies. He brings an awful lot of skills to this Ontario Legislature. He said he was going to come down here and fight for jobs, do something about the debt. We've now found out it's a much more horrendous debt than any of us had been told previously. He's been debating the rent control bill.

Why would the Liberals bring in a rent control bill? Obviously, those of us that knock on doors know that people in Ontario, people in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, can't afford their rent. They're subject to the largest income tax increase in the history of Ontario. They're subject to the largest sales tax increase in the history of Ontario. We're now continuing to see this government rolling out the largest electricity rate increases in the history of Ontario. So you've got an ass-backward way of doing something with rent, because people can't afford it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I spoke to this bill at length, for about an hour, I think, the week before last. Once again, it's a small bill that addresses 1% of the issues that actually are affecting Ontarians with respect to affordable housing, the cost of rent, the cost of utilities, food.

My colleagues and I had a bit of a discussion as people were speaking today and we said that if there was more effort made at reducing utility costs, ensuring that people had enough social assistance to actually pay their rent and feed themselves, that we would save tons of dollars—probably millions of dollars in health care costs, because we all know that nutrition is one of the most important things you can do to maintain your health.

We also know that people actually have to go out and steal food because they don't get enough money on social assistance to be able to feed their families. And then we end up with people in jails because they're committing

petty theft in order to feed their families, and we know that it costs \$45,000 or \$50,000 a year to actually keep someone behind bars just because they were out trying to get some food or something else to look after their family.

This government needs to set some real targets and put some real dollars towards the affordable housing strategy. It made a commitment to that in its platform, but there is no mention of any dollars in the budget for housing in this province, so I think the government needs to put some money where its mouth is and get going with building some affordable housing in the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. We now return to the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It has been a pleasure to speak to this bill, but I go back to the fundamentals. This is all about being responsible. It's talking about the things that are really going to move our province forward. This bill is nothing more than something to detract us and distract us to having real, substantive debate about things like the budget.

**Interjection:** Ludicrous. Window-dressing.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It is ludicrous. It is window-dressing. We need to be talking about things that are going to get our province turned around. We are a have-not province. I'm embarrassed to say that. We need to be leading Confederation.

Talking about a 1% to 2.5% increase on something that is not going to impact many people across our province—we need to ensure that we're talking about those things that are definitely going to make a difference. We need to be talking about things like the budget, like reducing spending, like adding jobs.

This is nothing but window-dressing. This is just distracting, like a lot of the bills they bring out. They haven't thought it through. They didn't speak to the—as I mentioned earlier, very similar to the horse racing industry. All of a sudden, "This is where we're going. Tough luck. Sorry about your luck."

You can't go there. You need to speak to the people who are going to have consequences. This is going to have—

**Interjection:** Listen to the people.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Listen to the people, absolutely. They need to understand that these are going to have ramifications far broader than just a 1% to 2.5% increase. Everyone has to be able to look at this and understand: Is it going to be helpful? I trust that the people at home watching and those people who will hear about this are saying, "Why are we talking about something that is so out there when we haven't addressed the big issues?"

They are going to double our deficit to \$30 billion. They're going to double the debt to \$400 billion. How many affordable housing units are we going to be able to put out there for anyone in need with that type of industry going on and that type of disrespect for the people who pay the freight?

This is nothing more than something to distract us from the big topics that we should be talking about—the



budget, debt reduction and improving and increasing jobs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I feel it is necessary to once again remind the House that we are actually debating Bill 19, that the comments should be making reference to the bill and that the questions and comments following the speeches should be making reference to the speeches that have been made.

Further debate.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's my pleasure to add to the debate on Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2011.

Once again, this isn't, in itself—it's getting old here, but I'm new here. To me, this isn't really a bill in itself; it's a housekeeping measure. Is it a good thing to put not a freeze, but a freeze on the rate that rents can rise? Yes. In itself, it's not a bad thing, but it seems more to create speaking points than to actually do anything. If we quote the Federation of Metro Tenants' Association, if this bill had been in place for the last two years, on an average \$1,000 monthly rent, it would make \$3 a month difference. So it's not really as big a thing as it's being portrayed.

People are saying that people are going off topic, and some people have been going a bit off topic. But I've been listening to this debate over the last—and reading about it, and some of the things, it's hard not to go off topic because there are a lot of things that affect renters and tenants and landlords that won't be impacted by this bill.

So that I won't get accused of going off topic, I'm going to read something from the minister's opening debate. This is from the minister: "I think we tend to forget sometimes that there was a time not long ago when government didn't see a role for itself in monitoring available housing, let alone partnering to build housing....

"We tend to forget that there was a time when government did not take that responsibility as part of what it was expected to do, but we do." Once again, this is the Liberal minister. "We think it's a very important aspect of our responsibility as a government to monitor the housing supply in the province, to make sure that there is a balance, and Bill 19 is one aspect of that responsibility." But once again, even in these words, the words make it sound much bigger than what's actually going on.

If we quote someone else—and a lot of people like to quote the Drummond report. In the Drummond report—and to many, he's the king of cuts—but Mr. Drummond recommends "doubling the allocation for affordable housing in the Infrastructure Ontario affordable housing loan fund to \$1 billion, to be financed by the sale of government bonds; reversing the cuts in both operating and capital dollars for affordable housing in the past year and restoring the approximately \$600 million that is required to build new homes, repair run-down housing and support housing-related services." If even Mr. Drummond recognizes there's a problem in affordable housing bigger than what Bill 19 is seeming to address, then I think we've got bigger fish to fry in this sector.

It really came to my attention last week. It was constituency week last week. One of my appointments scheduled was Mary in Kirkland Lake. Mary is 77 years old. She really reminded me of my mom. She's the same age as my mom. She could be all our moms or grandmas. She was prim and proper, and she came into my office and she had just been evicted. She had been evicted, and it was done correctly. The notice had been given.

1730

The reason that this is happening in places like Kirkland Lake—there is a downside to being in a boom town when it's booming, because you can charge astronomical rents. Mary was evicted because the landlord wants to make more money. Was she protected by this bill? No, not at all. But another big problem that Mary faces in this town—because we haven't spent what we were promising the people to spend, or what they were promising the people to spend: We haven't spent on affordable housing, on geared-to-income housing. Remember, in a boom town, there's no such thing as a cheap apartment unless it's regulated.

Mary's wait for geared-to-income housing in Kirkland Lake is two years. Her eviction date is May 31. Now, there's nothing in this bill that's going to help Mary—nothing. Mary isn't an isolated case. That's the biggest problem. My staff are doing everything we can to find a place for Mary in this province—in this province, where we argue about 1% to 2.5% and where we say we've spent all this money and blah, blah, blah, and we've got percentages, we all quote percentages, we all quote big numbers and no one understands, but the real question is, what about Mary? What about all the Marys? That's the real questions. May 31—the wait is two years for geared-to-income housing in Kirkland Lake.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** For seniors.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** For seniors. And people think, "Yeah, well, she should have prepared better." You know what? A lot of these are hard-working people who worked their whole lives in towns like this. Inflation got the better of their pensions. In a lot of cases and in mining towns, pensions, when they did happen—what happened is, they had dummy companies. They transferred the mine to another company, and the pension was gone once again in this province, in this country.

I don't have an answer for Mary; I don't have an answer. And you know what? I can't give her an answer, "Well, you know what? G19: They're working really hard on G19. And once we get that in, we'll help you out." Telling Mary about the healthy homes renovation tax credit is another one. It will help a certain—

**Interjection:** Small percentage.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** —small percentage of people. There's no doubt about that. This bill will also help a certain small percentage of people. And in itself, once again, it's more of a regulation change than a bill.

We have the chance. We have the chance to actually—and since Drummond is actually saying we should spend more money on affordable housing, I think all three parties should agree. We actually have a chance in this House to do things that really, really impact people.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Why don't you put that on your list of demands?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Maybe we should.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Maybe those sprinklers for old-age homes, too.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Well, we are doing our best on this side to make sure that this minority government works. It's up to the party opposite whether or not to worry about it, because on this side of the House, we are worried about the Marys across the province. We don't want to give them answers, "Well, we're working on amendments. We're working on a little regulation change," because this case—and it's not the only one that I've had, but it was one of the toughest ones, because I saw my mom across the desk. Because I'm standing here and because I've got a business as well, I'm capable of taking care of my mom, but not everybody else is. It's fine to banter back and forth, but it's a serious, serious issue, and I hope that we take the opportunity to seriously look at this and to propose more encompassing bills and make big—if changes need to be made, let's make them. But let's not try to take bills like this—and the healthy homes renovation tax credit is the same type of thing. Is it bad legislation? Probably not. Are we going to support it? Yes. Is it legislation that the people of this province really deserve?

**Interjection:** Or need.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Or need? You know, someone like Mary. I spent a lot of time today talking about Mary, but Mary is a real person who, on May 31, not due to any of her own fault—this is the one time in her life that she needs help from us, and this is the one time—

**Interjection.**

**Mr. John Vanthof:** She lived in that apartment for 14 years. This is the one time in her life that—our system is going to fail us. I hope that we come to our senses and do something for Mary. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I listened to the comments made by the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane. I appreciate a lot of what he has to say. In my riding of Scarborough Southwest, we have a large tenant population, and I've been in a lot of those apartments, knocking on doors for many, many years during election time. I would say that I agree with a lot of what he has to say. There are people out there, tenants, who are suffering. Our government has tried its very best to address as many of those concerns as possible. I think this bill is supportable. I thank the member for indicating his support at this stage. I'm sure that at committee, when it gets to committee, there will be more discussion about it and possibly some amendments. Hopefully we can agree on some of those amendments.

Last year, our guideline increase was 0.7%. That's the lowest on record. So we are trying our best to help tenants in every riding across Ontario. Now, I remember that the Conservatives introduced a bill many years ago—it was called the Tenant Protection Act—that

actually worked in favour of the landlords. People were asking me, "Why is this law in place? It really took away a lot of my rights as a tenant." We got rid of that act and brought in Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act. It focuses on the right thing, rent increase guidelines for every year. Some of the apartments in my riding are in very poor shape. We need to address that issue as well. The capital repairs in my riding are huge. We have a lot of affordable and assisted housing units in my riding, but the main thing is to get this out of the debate here and bring it to committee. Once we're at committee, we can address it and make changes or amendments to this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the time to address this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** First of all, I want to say congratulations to my relatively new friend from Timiskaming—Cochrane for a good piece of debate. While he excuses himself for being new, I would have to say: New or not, you're quite perceptive, sir. You're right: This bill hardly warrants being a bill. That's not to say we don't support it. I've seen private members' motions that are longer than this bill. It's a regulatory issue, and it's taking eight hours of debate in this Legislature to come to the conclusion that we should allow the minister to set a guideline that's somewhere between 0.5% and 2.5% on a per annum basis based on the CPI. That just summarized the entire bill right there. So why bother debating 10 or 20 minutes?

The points that have to be made here are not so much about the nature of the bill as what we're talking about. We're talking about rentals. In a time when, if you really want to address the global scenario—and let's talk about Toronto. Take a trip outside next time the bell rings, which seems to be fairly often in here; I'm not sure why. Take a look and count the number of cranes you can see in the sky. It must be 40. Maybe there are 50. These are cranes that are building condominiums. Who is buying those condominiums? Offshore money, for the most part, because they know a good investment when they see one. So they get rented as condominiums that are not under the control of this act. That's what we're dealing with. As a matter of fact, in the last condo that I lived in, which I owned, it was a rental conversion, which is also happening. Why? Because the property can be better used when people are getting condo investments into those units—nice units—as opposed to the rental ones.

**1740**

So what we're talking about here is a very narrow edge of the wedge, a very thin piece of our society that, granted, needs protection and that's why my party will vote for it, but if you really want to look at the rental situation in Toronto, very particularly, or anywhere else in the province, you have to get an awful lot broader than just whether or not we're going to be in line with the CPI.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I wanted to have some feedback on the presentation given by my colleague here.



He talked about seniors, and Mary, in particular, who is having a very unfortunate incident happen where she's going to be evicted, and the fact that there is a booming town in Kirkland—I think he said Kirkland Lake—Mary's rent probably is going to be unaffordable when she's looking for a new residence. So here's Mary on a fixed income, with no affordable housing in sight in the same city she's been in for the last 14 years, and a messed-up pension because of one company sending it to another and then losing it. How do we help Mary? We need to help Mary and other seniors by having affordable housing so that they have alternatives, a good place to live, seniors who—I hope Mary doesn't end up in a very unpredictable circumstance and, heaven forbid, have to be homeless. That would be really devastating, to have a senior who can't find an affordable place to live on the street, when they've worked all their lives and deserve the dignity of having a home that they can be safe in and age in until they're ready for a nursing home or, hopefully, good home care so that she can remain in her apartment even longer.

Having this small bill presented isn't helping Mary, and affordable housing is part of something that all Ontarians are asking for in my riding as well. I met with seniors—the Argyle seniors' group—and that was their first question. They said, "Teresa, we want to see more affordable housing." That's something that's extremely important to seniors.

Even though this is a very small step to affordability, it isn't enough.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I want to thank the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane for sharing with us the concerns raised by his constituents, and I do recognize the concern about housing.

But let's go back to what the purpose of this bill is all about. The bill is focused specifically on the guideline, on making sure that it will be not less than 1% and not more than 2.5%, capping the rent increase. This is what my constituents in Scarborough—Agincourt are asking me to advocate for, in terms of protecting the tenants and at the same time making sure the landlord is supported as well.

Like many of us in this House, we have thousands of tenants in our ridings, and this government is committed to protecting both the tenants and the landlords supporting them. We recognize the concerns with this bill, but that's why we have committees to debate this bill. I also want to recognize my colleague from Scarborough Southwest about his comment, bringing this bill forward and then having a debate in the committee.

The proposed bill allows some stability and affordability for our tenants during these tough economic times, while at the same time recognizing the fact that we also have to support the landlords so that they can maintain and operate those apartments.

Mr. Speaker, it may not be a perfect piece of legislation at this time, but it will address accessibility and

affordability for tenants across Ontario. It is the right thing to do at this time. I think this piece of legislation allows all of us to address the issue of housing across the board, but for the first time to address the tenant increase, the rent increase, and that's an important thing to start with, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We'll return to the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to thank the members who commented on my comments: the members from Scarborough Southwest, Thornhill, London—Fanshawe and Scarborough—Agincourt.

There's been a lot of talk that when the bill gets to committee, we'll be able to amend, but there's not much to amend. It is pretty straightforward, and you know what? We're not complaining about that part. What we have a problem with is the big words surrounding it, all the help we're giving, when it's actually very narrowly scoped. If this were a broader-based bill, then we would have a chance to put amendments forward that would make a difference to more people. What this appears to me—once again, I support it. I don't have a problem with what this very narrow thing does. It would be much better for the people of Ontario if we made bigger proposals, had grander ideas, so we could actually have meaningful debate in committee about how we'd actually make things better for as broad a scope as possible.

It's going to be hard to amend this bill to help more people than it does, and that's the problem. It's got more speaking points in it than it has actual meat in it. If you read the speaking points, if you listen to the speaking points from the government—got no problem. If we get there, it's great for the campaign trail, all the things we're doing for tenants. But it gives more speaking points than it actually has meat, and I'm really hoping that we get to the point where we actually provide bills that have meat, where we can actually amend them or change them and really argue about real things so we can make things better for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I rise today to speak to Bill 19. I have to say that I'm disappointed. Rental housing in Ontario is facing some tough challenges, both on the landlord side and on the tenant side as well. One just has to walk through our local Queen's Park neighbourhood to see all the new condominium developments advertising units that will be future rental units starting at over \$250,000 each.

It's little wonder we aren't all homeowners, and many people in this province might not want to be one. Sometimes it's a career that makes it very difficult to put down roots to purchase that family home, or perhaps it's just a commitment that they're unwilling to take on with all the uncertainty that's going on in this great province. They just can't count on anything anymore. They remember the promises that this McGuinty government made of affordable living, of no tax increases, of tackling the energy issues and more. But what have they seen

that's scaring them and forcing them to jump out of the housing market and into the renting market, and taking on perceived lower-cost units of the rentals? For one thing, Ontario's unemployment rate has been higher than the national average for over five years, and the outlook isn't reassuring. This government continues to borrow at record levels when even their hand-picked experts are warning them about getting spending under control and with countries failing all around them simply because their governments would not address the debt issue. The McGuinty government finds it easier to foolishly close its eyes and pass the cost of their mismanagement and excess on to our children and grandchildren.

But more likely it's a matter of things being unaffordable. They've seen the cost of ownership skyrocket over the past eight years, with people losing their homes because of a lack of employment opportunities and private sector salaries that are not keeping up with inflation. They have seen the largest tax increases in the history of this province with the Ontario health tax and the HST and over 100 other tax and fee increases over McGuinty's term in government. A mortgage used to be a tool for those wishing to settle and build their life in one place by spreading reasonable costs over one's working career. In the current climate, particularly in urban areas, we witness instead how mortgages have become unaffordable when added to the escalating costs of hydro, property taxes and other living expenses. Truly, the past eight years are becoming known as the Liberal reign of terror.

This kind of market is not one that Bill 19 pretends to address. The people whom the party opposite wishes to dupe with this bill are those Ontarians who cannot—

*Interjection.*

1750

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Okay—aim to step up the property ladder, the families facing tough situations, who see their paycheques vanish into rent, energy, HST, payroll deductions and more. These Ontarians are not playing to be poor, so this government shouldn't be playing politics with them.

Bill 19, as I will explain, does nothing and creates a bigger problem down the road. Let's take, for example, the city of Toronto, where, according to a study done in 2005, over 90% of the rental units in Toronto were built before 1991, with most of them being even older. The same study showed how, between 1987 and 1996, more than a third of the completed housing units were destined for the rental market. Between 1997 and 2005, that dropped to barely 5%. This means, for those on the other side not paying enough attention, that unless this city has experienced a sudden boom in rental construction during the past seven years, the rental units subject to the rent increase guidelines—those housing units that Bill 19 is supposed to protect—are getting older and older. These houses and blocks are subject to all the ills of aging. They will need some major work and major repairs soon, if they don't already. They've become less desirable.

They are probably not as energy-efficient as the newer ones, a point that I'll get to later.

I won't blame the exodus from the rental market I just mentioned on the rent increase guidelines, though it would be easy to do so. The ownership market is much more lucrative and promises much faster returns than the rental ones—buy, sell, cash and repeat. There are no searches for tenants, no credit checks and no reference checks; no dealing with tenants who refuse to pay or cause a nuisance or bring their units into disrepair.

When it comes to spin, this government can't be outdone. It's easy for them to claim that we may not have strict rental controls and the landlords are free to apply for over-the-guideline increases at any time.

The immediate effect of Bill 19 will be to force more and more landlords to submit their actions to bureaucracy every year. More applications mean more hassles for both landlords and the Landlord and Tenant Board. Let us remember that whenever we deal with the Landlord and Tenant Board, it is never cheap. And what Bill 19 accomplishes outside the greater immediate costs of the landlord—a strict ceiling on the rent increase guidelines may be the final nail in the coffin for some landlords, who include hydro and energy prices inside the rents. Hydro rates have increased 84% since this government took over, and are forecasted to increase more than 40% over the next four years. Again, the math doesn't add up for this government.

The most vulnerable tenants, instead, will feel this government's failed energy policies bite them the hardest, sometimes forcing them out of the private rental market and into social housing. My constituency office receives many calls every week from vulnerable tenants struggling to make ends meet because of the rising costs of living, and rent is not usually their biggest complaint.

Let's leave the affluent rental developments for a minute—those that my honourable colleagues may inhabit—and venture into the lower-end rental market. There is little research required before one stumbles across reports of infestations, disrepair, fire hazards, health hazards and general living conditions that one would gladly do without. What can a landlord do in a large development other than repair and pass on the costs and hope for some improvements?

The present system is inefficient and needs reform, but Bill 19 cannot even qualify as a Band-aid. It seeks to tackle a problem that's not there.

Let's take a look at this. The rent increase guideline has been below 2.5% for most of the past decade and below 3% throughout. In fact, it has averaged under 2.1% for the past 10 years and under 1.7% for the last five. So where is the problem?

Clearly, this bill does not address the real issues and is only meant to have the appearance of meeting the needs of renters in Ontario. The real issues need to be solved. There have hardly been any development completions in the private sector destined for rent. The rental housing stock is aging and government policies are eating away at the incomes of Ontarians. With landlords able to apply



for increases above the guidelines, what is the bill accomplishing?

I would hope that this party opposite is not so manipulative as to force more Ontarians into social housing and thus require a stranglehold on their lives. The average stay in social housing is 10 years. As the *Globe and Mail* reports, "We shouldn't be proud of how many people live in public housing. We should be ashamed."

Bill 19 is openly hostile to landlords and is against tenants in equal measure. It is a signal that landlords' business is not welcome, nor are their interests. It's even worse than a feel-good bill. It solves no problems and will only spook the private rental market. Rumours,

mostly unjustified, of house prices cooling in Canada, particularly in Toronto, are abundant. What keeps our smaller landlords from selling up? When they eventually do, or the oldest rental units get condemned or demolished, what shall remain except newer units or longer, exhausting waiting lists for social housing? If this is the Liberal image of housing bliss, then I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being quite close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1757.*

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N° 37

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 17 April 2012

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 17 avril 2012

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Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 17 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 17 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 4, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / *Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you, Speaker, and good morning. It is a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 13. I'm happy to rise today and to comment on such an important issue.

As we know, over the last number of years, the need for serious anti-bullying initiatives in Ontario has become particularly urgent, and as a parent, I've seen it firsthand. I've seen it with my peers, my friends as they talk about what they have to deal with in the school system, and so I'm pleased, actually, that we're trying to bring forward some legislation here that will try to deal with it.

Therefore, let me say that I must commend both the Minister of Education and my colleague from Kitchener for bringing forth legislation. It is clearly an attempt on both of their parts—and I know that my colleagues in the NDP caucus have also been active on it—to try to deal with an issue that is not an easy fix. I think if we've seen one thing in this debate, it's that there is no easy fix for how we're going to deal with bullying in our schools, in our society.

Much to my and I think every other parent's frustration, bullying seems to have mutated in recent years to something far more vicious than any of us would have been used to or seen when we went through the school system. It's truly saddening to consider the many new forms of torment that children are suffering and do suffer at the hands of a bully, particularly as we widen our social circles with Facebook and other electronic forms of communication, which, while they have a benefit of widening our circle of interest, also have an ability to—

how shall I say?—do the pile-on very quickly, and that's where bullying has taken on a very different form in today's society.

The very word "bully" used to be associated with lost lunch money and broken sandcastles. Of course, now we know of far too many examples where it has a much more sinister association. Cyberbullying, text threats, vicious beatings and highly hateful discrimination are now commonly associated with bullying, and rightfully so, Speaker, because these heinous things do occur and bullying does often reach these extremes. While awareness of this fact is critical, it's also equally imperative that action complements awareness. The members of this House, Speaker, must act to combat bullying in our schools and make sure that every Ontario child is happy going to school in the morning and as well when they are coming home in the afternoon.

I think it's fitting at this time to take note of one member in particular who has worked very hard to both raise awareness about and put an end to bullying in our schools. The member of which I speak, of course, is Elizabeth Witmer, the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo. As a former teacher, board chair, critic and Minister of Education, Mrs. Witmer has brought a great deal of wisdom and expertise to this debate on bullying, and I would urge, encourage in any way possible, that we incorporate and we listen to that depth of knowledge that we have sitting on this side.

Simply because we are on this side of the House does not mean that we do not have any ideas, and if there is an example of it right now, it is the private member's bill that Mrs. Witmer took three years to debate, to discuss, to have consultation with before she was prepared to put it into the chamber and debate. I guess I am disappointed that the Minister of Education hasn't accepted that offer of assistance, accepted that offer of help from the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, because I think there's a lot to be gained there, and it is not for a partisan reason. It is not for a political gain. It is, quite frankly, because she wants to help and because she wants to make it better for all students in our school system.

Before the constituency week, we heard the member from Nepean–Carleton, our education critic, relate some terribly heart-wrenching stories of her friends, the Hubley family, who tragically lost their son Jamie to the senseless, heartless persecution that too often characterizes bullying today. Speaker, as my friend and fellow member said so graciously, we owe it to the Hubleys and every family in Ontario touched by these cruel actions to prevent these kinds of tragedies from ever occurring



again. After hearing the story of Jamie and the many other children who suffer needlessly, I'd be shocked if there was even one member left in this chamber who thought Ontario students don't need legislation preventing that kind of brutality.

This brings me to the legislation before us. About four months ago, there were two competing bills introduced in this chamber back to back. The Liberal government introduced Bill 13, and the PC opposition, through the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, introduced Bill 14. While these bills are greatly different in their approach, they were born of the same positive and noble intention, namely that never again in our province should a student feel so isolated, so alone, so depressed as a result of bullying that they should do the unthinkable and take their own life. It is unfortunate, Speaker, that, yes, there may be some extreme cases, and the fact that if even one of these tragedies occurs, that we didn't try to prevent it. If there was ever a time or a subject to unite, to unify the provinces in this chamber, this should be it.

I've studied both bills and I've listened to the competing arguments and I have great respect for the authors of both bills for their passion, their enthusiasm and their dedication. But in my mind, Bill 14 takes a more comprehensive approach to eliminating bullying once and for all across Ontario. It is for this reason that I honestly believe Bill 14 is a superior bill to the one that we are debating here this morning, and I really do hope that there will be a—how shall I say?—meeting of the minds so that we can incorporate some of the positive ideas that my colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo has brought forward in her Bill 14, to be incorporated or replaced into Bill 13.

For example, in Bill 14, the definition of the actual word "bullying" is more thorough than in Bill 13, since it focuses on what constitutes bullying and how it affects the victim. I feel this is a more radical approach as opposed to focusing on the reason for bullying, which is relative.

Bill 14, by design, includes all conceivable reasons a child may be bullied. Moreover, it also takes into account the wide-ranging effects bullying has on the victim, the bully themselves, the school environment, the education process and the family.

This comprehensive nature is also reflected in Bill 14's specific focus on cyberbullying, something Bill 13 is lacking. In today's day and age, we are constantly exposed to information 24 hours a day, and no one more so than our children. While this is often touted as a benefit of modern society, the dark side of this connectivity is that it means bullying can often become a 24-hour affair that very quickly escalates and gets out of control.

Bill 13 mentions cyberbullying in passing; however, it comes to nowhere near the thoroughness of Bill 14's definition, which defines cyberbullying as creating an anonymous webpage, impersonating another person, communicating material to more than one person or posting material on an electronic medium that can be accessed by more than one person.

After reviewing Bill 13, I've noted it requires school boards to issue biannual surveys to students in order to

collect information on the success of boards' policies and plans. This information, however, is for internal board use only. I guess what frustrates me is that it seems to be another process-oriented idea where we have more paperwork and more surveys to fill out, and yet we're not actually dealing with the issue faced in front of us.

I know that my time is coming to a close, but it does remind me of another issue that we have before the chamber, and that, of course, is the frustration where we are trying to get into the process of what is happening at Ornge. For that reason, I must call for adjournment of the debate until we get the select committee on Ornge.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin-Caledon has requested adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those not in favour, say "no."

I believe the noes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 0913 to 0943.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask all members to take their seats. Order. I'd ask all members to take their seats.

Ms. Jones has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour will rise and remain standing to be counted.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing to be counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 28; the nays are 36.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

Further debate?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Oh, are you? Okay.

Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It sounds like you're suffering from the same voice issue others are.

It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this bill. I certainly would ask both my friends from the Liberal Party and my friends from the Progressive Conservatives that they work together so that we can see this bill moving forward, because that's what their children need. This is not about us. This is about our children, and this is about the safety of our children in our schools. We should be together at committee looking at both bills. There are strengths in both.

I also want to take this opportunity to give a shout out to the trans community, who had a historic victory yesterday in the Supreme Court of Ontario, who ruled that they do not have to have sex-reassignment surgery to be considered a trans person. That's good. We have more work to do on that file.

But here's the bullying bill. The bullying bill needs to move forward. Unfortunately, because of other issues pressing, it's not. I would hope that both the minister,

who brought in Bill 13, and of course the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, Liz Witmer, who brought in Bill 14, could get together and speak and make this happen. That's my ardent wish, and my ardent wish is the wish of the LGBT community, and it is the wish of our schools, including OECTA, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association. Shout outs to them, because everyone who is concerned about our children is concerned about their safety.

We need something in place by September. To get it in place by September we need to get it to committee now. That's our fervent belief in the New Democratic Party, and Andrea Horwath's fervent belief. We hope that both the members opposite and the members next to us share in that belief for the future of our students. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The Minister of Education.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to use my time that I have to speak today to encourage my friends on the opposite side of the House to join with us in our endeavour to see this bill passed so that we can have it in place in schools before September.

We are committed to working with our colleagues in opposition to make this legislation as strong as possible. I'm pleased to tell this House that I have been in touch with MPP Witmer. I have sent her a letter with a long list of items that we'd like to include in the Accepting Schools Act from Bill 14. But I want to be clear that it is imperative that the procedural games in the House end so that this bill can go to committee, so that we can hear from Ontarians, so that we can see this legislation in our schools in September.

Ontario students depend on us in this Legislature to be responsible, to understand that they need to be safe in our schools, to make this bill as strong as possible. I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that we're absolutely committed to doing that. Both bills raise important, important issues, and we look forward to working. But I do want to say that it is absolutely critical that we acknowledge that Bill 13 speaks widely to the issues that students face in our schools.

I just want to take the last moments that I have to read a section from the preamble, just so that Ontarians watching today will know what the bill is about: "Recognize that a whole-school approach is required and that everyone—government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community—has a role to play in creating a positive school climate, preventing inappropriate behaviour such as bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia."

We believe that all students have the right to have a school climate that is safe and accepting for us. That's what Bill 13 speaks to. I hope that we will be able to see this debate conclude and move on and get this bill in our schools to where it needs to be so that Ontario students are protected.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the member from Dufferin–Caledon. I think she brought a very balanced commentary to Bill 13, paying respect, of course, to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo on Bill 14. It's in that spirit of co-operation that I think both sides of the House are trying to move forward to end bullying. But even the tone this morning of the Minister of Education, who's here, the ultimatum kind of minister I call her—she's given that same thing to the teacher unions, the sort of "my way or the highway"—that's sort of like a bullying culture that I'm starting to pick up. I think it's critical that she says that we do have this in place, but she's not really clearly explaining the motive for the procedural wrangling here.

**0950**

The government and the opposition passed a motion in this House that there would be a select committee. That select committee would be on Ornge. Now, she's leaving the impression that this is about Bill 13. It's not about that at all. It's about Ornge and the waste and scandalous spending on an issue; we insist there be a select committee.

For the clarification of the minister trying to leave the impression that procedural wrangling here was based on Bills 13 and 14, it's not at all. It's based on the inability of the Liberal government, under Premier McGuinty, to deal fairly with the people. In fact, on that bill there, they're bullying us. They really are. They won't have a select committee. They're using all sorts of procedural standing order issues, with their House leader carrying the sword.

But getting back to Bill 13, I would put on the table that we all respect the fact that there should be opposition totally to any form of bullying. That's a given. We have to find a compromise here to make this happen, and I would put on the table the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' document Respecting Difference. I think that's a very good starting point, that we could have an agreement and move forward, as the minister suggests we should.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'm glad to be here this morning and I want to congratulate the member from Dufferin–Caledon on her 10-minute thoughts on the anti-bullying Bill 13.

In her speech, she recognized the efforts of the Minister of Education and also the efforts of the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I think recognizing the fact that two members have brought the same concerns over the same issue should make us think that we need to work together on this bill, improving Bill 13. I think Bill 14, which the member from Kitchener–Waterloo brought forward, has a lot of valid points and I think they really need to be looked at when it goes to committee—Bill 13—to incorporate some of these great ideas.

We also, the NDP, the New Democrats, have a lot of feedback that we can offer into Bill 13.

Bullying, of course, has come from the time when we went to school, escalated to the time that it is here today.



One of those things is the cyberbullying, and cyberbullying needs to be addressed, which is one of the items in Bill 14 that was brought forward. I think that's something that really needs to be looked at. Bullying under cyberbullying is basically a faceless act and it can hurt. Words sometimes hurt more than actions for children.

So I encourage the government to work together. This, to me, is the purest of issues, a nonpartisan issue. We all have children, we all have family that we certainly don't want this to have a negative impact on—bullying. So to make this a better environment in our schools, let's work together in the House so that we can set the tone that we are going to work together to help eliminate bullying.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Dufferin—Caledon has two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the members from High Park, Durham, London—Fanshawe and the minister.

I must focus my comments on what the minister chose to speak of. She used words like “have this bill passed,” “procedural games.” Well, quite frankly, Minister, those procedural games are us making our point. They are clearly laid out in the standing orders. We have every right to do it. It's called the will of the Legislature. We voted to ensure that Ornge go to a select committee and to start looking at what the issues are. We need to find out what is going on at Ornge. And the fact that you're using “procedural games” as your response to Bill 13 and Bill 14, I find quite offensive.

What I would like to see is for the minister to stand up and say what kind of discussions she's had with the member from Kitchener—Waterloo. You don't need to send a letter. She's right there. You could actually have a meeting and have a meeting of the minds, because there are some excellent ideas in Bill 14. If you would only open your ears and listen instead of only talking and saying, “We must do it this way because we're Liberals and we're the smart ones”—it doesn't work that way. We're legislators; we all come here with good ideas. If you would start listening instead of just talking, you might actually come forward with some positive suggestions and we could solve this issue.

You and I are both mothers, and we know what's happening in our classrooms, we know what's happening in our arenas, in our communities, and for heaven's sakes, let's try to solve it. And you need to solve it not by writing letters but by actually sitting down and talking to someone who has done the research, who has spoken to the school boards, who has spoken to the principals and the schools and the parents, and I just wish you would do that now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** It's an honour to rise today to speak to Bill 13. I'd like to congratulate the member from Dufferin—Caledon and her passion when it comes to this issue and the fact that what the Minister of Education said was completely bogus and did not deal at all with what we've been fighting for, which is a select commit-

tee on Ornge. That's something that the government has ignored, despite the fact that the Minister of Health, on probably 12 or 15 different occasions in this House, said she would do what the will of the House was and we would move forward with a select committee on Ornge. I'll get back to Ornge in a moment.

I have listened with great interest as several of my colleagues have risen in the House to speak both to this bill and to Bill 14, which the House passed some three weeks ago, four weeks ago, something like that. There has been a lot of contentious debate in the House on this issue; there are a lot of good reasons and bad reasons for that. On an issue like bullying, that impacts our kids every day at school, this shouldn't be a contentious issue here in the Legislature, but it has become that way because of the political games that have been played by the current government.

I have no doubt that there are members of every party in the House who are genuinely interested in combating the bullying epidemic. There are a lot of parents who are here in the House and have been speaking on this. There are a lot of former teachers who are here and know the situation in our schools. Madam Speaker, I remember listening to the member for Trinity—Spadina in the House just a couple of weeks ago as he gave a rather passionate analysis of both bills alongside each other and which one had nothing in it—the government bill—and which one was comprehensive, and that would be Bill 14, put forward by my colleague here in the Progressive Conservative caucus, Elizabeth Witmer, from Kitchener.

It has been speeches like the one given by the member from Trinity—Spadina that show that there is a difference between these two bills, and there is a very serious matter at hand here that has to be dealt with. There are three-plus years', or two-plus years', anyway, worth of research and thought that went into the bill that Liz Witmer put forward, and I don't know how much went into the bill that the current government has put forward, but by the flimsy nature of it, it doesn't seem like a lot has gone into it.

When the issues are big enough and pervasive enough, we are actually capable of overcoming our differences in this House, and we have many differences, and that's obvious.

What is discouraging to me is that this bill is rather typical of the way the government has crafted policy over much of the last eight years. This government has used policy as a way of saying that some people in Ontario are just a little more important than others. Nobody on the other side seems willing to say why a kid who's bullied because of their weight or a kid who's bullied because of their race or religion or economic class is any less worthy of special protection or special designation by the government. That's because they aren't; all kids should be treated as equals.

When you're a parent, as I am of two young daughters, and your kid is being bullied, which one of my daughters was in school, you want to do everything you can to protect them. You want them to be safe at school.

You want them to be safe on the school bus when they're on their way to school. Unfortunately for my daughter, when she was in grade 1, she didn't have that safety. She was bullied. And she's a wonderful, normal young girl who did absolutely nothing to provoke any kind of bullying, but that's the nature of bullying. Sometimes it doesn't need a reason or an excuse. So it's very frustrating to me to see the way that the political games are being played with this legislation right now. Why not go with the best bill possible to give the teachers and the educators and the administrators the weapons and the information and the tools that they need to combat bullying in our schools?

**1000**

It's inconceivable to me and to any parent that someone wouldn't see their child the way a mom or dad sees them. Of course, as I sit here as a father of two, I can't understand why other people wouldn't see that these are children and they need to be protected.

As I said in my past speakings here in the Legislature, I'm a long-time coach of young people, young girls in particular, when it comes to hockey and, in the past, soccer and baseball. We teach them to stand up for themselves. We give them confidence, and I think the same thing should be happening in our schools right now. They need to have the tools at their disposal, the administrators and teachers and the principals, to ensure that our children are safe and that they are given the space that they need to thrive in our schools.

As I said, Madam Speaker, this is not atypical of the way, though, that this government does business by and large here in this House. The people in this House have heard me talk about Prince Edward county in the past, which is in my riding. The county is the perfect example of exactly how divisive this government's policies are. For some reason, when we're talking about power projects, the citizens in Mississauga are just a little bit more important to this government and worthy of more protection than the citizens of Prince Edward county are. We saw that illustrated perfectly in the last election. Even in the county itself, the project has proven to be an instrument of division there. There are families in the county that go back to the 18th century. In parts of the county, knowing someone's last name is often enough to know if their family is from South Marysburgh or Sophiasburgh ward. As it has with this bill, though, the government has used policy as an instrument of division, and that's what it's aimed to be: an instrument of division in this House.

It's hard, Madam Speaker, for me to stand up in the House and lend any support to legislation whose chief accomplishment is to tell one group of people that they're more important and more deserving of protection than another group of, in this case, children. All kids are worthy of protection from bullies.

In the Quinte region, we've been fortunate to have some great parents who stepped up and made this an issue for our community. What we're here to do, and I believe that every member of the House has an interest in this, is to ensure that we're not here again any time soon

to discuss a tragedy like one that my friend the member from Nepean-Carleton spoke about a few weeks ago, when she discussed what happened to the young figure skater named Jamie Hubley. I legitimately believe that there is a genuine interest on behalf of everyone in this House to prevent another kid and another family from going through that kind of ordeal.

I do know that back in the Quinte region today, administrators at the Hastings and Prince Edward school board have formed a partnership with the Hastings and Prince Edward Learning Foundation. They're actually having an anti-bullying symposium for all the secondary schools in our region. Tonight, they're having a cyber-parenting 101, which is parenting the always-on generation, which infers the fact that our kids are always on because they're always on the Internet, it seems, and there's a lot of cyberbullying going on there, of course. The special presentation is taking place tonight at Quinte Secondary School for parents from 7 until 9. Then tomorrow, there's actually a symposium that's taking place at Quinte Secondary School for students and staff in partnership with the learning foundation as well, and it's taking place all day tomorrow from 8:30 until 5. The keynote address there is "Virtual World-Real Consequences" by Bill Belsey, who's the president of the bullying.org site on the Internet and cyberbullying.org as well.

As I say, it is an important issue that is being dealt with at the local level by parents, by our Hastings and Prince Edward Learning Foundation and by our school board. But what we need to do here in the Legislature of Ontario is get this legislation passed so that we can actually get things moving in the right direction and give the administrators the tools that they need.

That's why I insist that Bill 14 is the right way to go. It's a far more comprehensive anti-bullying bill. It focuses on prevention, accountability and awareness. Bill 14, put forward by Liz Witmer, provides students, parents and educators with a strategy to raise awareness and prevent bullying, as well as the process to resolve it. It also collects data and reports to the ministry. The Liberal bill, unfortunately, does none of these things. That's why we need to see some real action by the Minister of Education and Liz Witmer in merging Bills 13 and 14 and putting them together in one large, comprehensive bill that can actually do the job that all of us I think believe is the appropriate thing to do, and that's do what we can to end bullying in our schools.

Madam Speaker, I'd also like to tell the House quickly about Mary. She's a 10-year-old at Parkdale public school who took her campaign against bullying to the local press. The Belleville Intelligencer did a story about a month ago as this whole debate was starting. Mary was picked on because some other kids thought she was a tomboy. She actually went into a washroom at the school and pulled down her pants so the other kids could see that she wasn't a boy and she was in fact a girl. These are the kinds of things that are occurring in our schools and these are the kinds of things that need to come to an end quickly.



We also need to get an end to this whole Ornge debacle. We need to form a select committee and have it formed now, and that's why I am moving adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Mr. Smith has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1007 to 1015.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Mr. Smith has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour will please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

Those opposed, please rise until counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 14; the nays are 36.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare this motion lost.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** This House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased today to introduce a good friend of mine and a colleague from the region of Durham, Dave Ryan, the mayor of Pickering. Welcome, Dave, to Queen's Park.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm pleased to welcome to the Legislature today Mr. Robert Alexander, the father of page William Alexander from École L'Heritage in St. Catharines. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would like to inform the members that we have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the Honourable Carmel Tebbutt, member of Parliament from the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, Australia. Please welcome the former Deputy Premier.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Now I would also ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the first session of the 40th Parliament. Could you please assemble?

Noah Alcantara-Aquino, from Newmarket-Aurora; William Alexander, from St. Catharines; Vincent Arff, from Ajax-Pickering; Shaumik Baki, from Windsor West; Brady Doyle, from Durham; Gillian Giovannetti, from Vaughan; Katarina Jakobsh, from Trinity-Spadina; Georgia Koumantaros, from Toronto-Danforth; Carley Maitland, from Wellington-Halton Hills; Ranbir Mangat, from Bramalea-Gore-Malton; Manak Mann, from Brampton-Springdale; Sarah McPherson, from Thunder

Bay-Atikokan; Andrew Mohan, from Thornhill; Talin Mooradian, from Simcoe North; Dia Mukherjee, from Etobicoke Centre; Shanice Nazareth, from Scarborough Centre; Jenny Peng, from Scarborough-Agincourt; Sabrina Schaly, from Parry Sound-Muskoka; Constantine Ttofas, from Scarborough-Guildwood; Safa Warsi, from Markham-Unionville.

These are our new pages for this session.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Finally, in the Speaker's gallery today are friends from the riding of Brant: Mr. Vince Bucci and his wife, Carol Bucci; Mr. Lance Calbeck; Mr. George Whibbs; and a great Canadian actor and my theatre arts teacher in grade 12, David Fox. We welcome you. You can all tell how well I'm acting. It's all an act.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Break a leg.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Break a leg. The member from Cambridge, come to order. For those who didn't hear, he asked me to break a leg.

It is now time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question today is to the Premier. Premier, as you know, your approach on this recent budget was a very weak response to a jobs crisis in the province of Ontario. It actually increases spending and drives the deficit up.

Yesterday, when I asked you about the debt trap that you're walking into, you said to me in Hansard that, "In fact, we cut \$17.7 billion." Can you point to me the exact page where you outline your \$17.7 billion in cuts?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** In fact, there is an entire addendum devoted to that very subject, and I'd recommend that to my honourable colleague.

I want to put something else on the table here. It occurs to me that when the good people of Ontario voted at the time of the last election, they voted in favour of a minority government. And it occurs to me that at that point in time, they also placed a heavy responsibility on all of us to work together on their behalf. I would say to my honourable colleague that he's coming very close—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It would seem to me that the responsibility that has been vested in each and every one of us is to find a way to make this government work for the people of Ontario. I can say that the NDP are making a sincere effort in that regard. I say to my honourable colleague he is not, and I leave it to him to tell the people of Ontario why it is he's not prepared to work in a sincere way with this government on this budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, you know this as well as I. You and I sat down across the table on November 8—it wasn't two sword lengths apart, it was two feet apart—and I laid out our positive vision for job creation in the province of Ontario, a pro-growth, pro-jobs agenda to make Ontario number one again. I laid out our plan to reduce spending in the province, to get back to balance. Premier, you didn't even think about it. You rejected every single proposal at the table that day, November 8, so I'm trying here in question period.

You just said to me, Premier, that the \$17.7 billion in cuts are in the addendum to the Ontario 2012 budget. I have this document; I've read through the document in total. I found a total of \$1 billion in savings. Can you point to me where the missing \$16 billion is, or is there a page you didn't include in the document that you yourself pointed out? Where's the \$17 billion?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Since the leader of the official opposition has withdrawn from any sincere effort to improve the budget, I would submit that he has forfeited his right to criticize the budget. Either you want to work with us to improve the budget as part of a collaborative process on behalf of the people of Ontario—either you're inside making it better or outside throwing stones. You can't have it both ways.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, I've now asked you two questions on what you said yesterday, which was "\$17.7 billion" in spending cuts. Premier, we need to trust your word. The problem is, what you said is not in keeping with the facts. Twice now, you have failed to indicate where these cuts are, because in reality that is not the case, Premier. You don't have these savings; you found barely \$1 billion in this book. And I'll tell you, 38 of the proposals in this addendum—38, sir—have no savings whatsoever; seven have no costing at all for the entire three-year plan.

Premier, this is a meagre, sad, weak attempt to try to balance the books of the province of Ontario, and I will make no apologies for standing up for Ontario families who sent us here to get spending under control and promote jobs in the province of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again I say to my honourable colleague that he is abdicating a very important responsibility that he owes Ontario families, which is to find a way to work in a collaborative spirit with our government to improve the budget insofar as the shortcomings that he perceives to be found in it.

We've received support of none other than Ernie Eves, former Premier; Janet Ecker, former finance minister; the Royal Bank of Canada, the Toronto Dominion Bank, Scotiabank, Dominion Bond Rating Service, BMO Nesbitt Burns, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I say to my honourable colleague, provide us with his list of those reliable financial organizations, banks and economic analysts who say that our budget doesn't go far enough. We'd love to get that list from my honourable colleague.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I don't know, Speaker, if the Premier has failed to read the budget in its entirety or if he was telling us things yesterday that are not, in fact, in keeping with the truth.

Premier, you've indicated \$17.7 billion in cuts. They're not—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would ask you to withdraw.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'll withdraw, Speaker.

We think it's important for the Premier to be accurate with the facts. The Premier describes forgone spending as savings. It's like going to the store looking to go on a wild spending spree of \$1,000, buying only \$200 and claiming that you saved \$800. It's a false analogy. No wonder we're in such trouble in the province of Ontario, Speaker, if that's the kind of math that the Premier is bringing to the table.

Let me ask you something further. The Drummond report, which you commissioned and then shortly put on the shelf, said on page 139 that each ministry and agency should be given a spending limit for the period that's projected to get back into balance, basically a ministry-by-ministry spending restraint plan until 2017-18. That was page 139 of the report.

Premier, can you point to what page in your own budget this Drummond recommendation is carried out in totality?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again I say to my honourable colleague that he has forfeited his right to criticize this budget because he refuses to be part of a positive, collaborative—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I believe we've gotten into a regular habit of simply saying, "I'll ask the question and then shout him down." I would ask the members to listen to the answer.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again I say to my honourable colleague, if he had any sincere determination to live up to his responsibility, which I feel he owes to Ontario families and Ontario businesses, then he would engage us in a positive, collaborative process in the way that we've been engaged with the leader of the third party for some time now. We may not agree on



everything, but I am convinced that when we work together, we can, in fact, find some common ground.

I say again to my honourable colleague, in the eyes of Ontario families, he has forfeited his right to criticize the budget because he's not prepared to be involved in a collaborative, productive process.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, Speaker, a brand new defence: If the Premier can't or simply won't answer my question, suddenly he says I have no right to ask these questions. Sir, I have a right to stand here to ask these questions to hold you accountable on behalf of the people who pay these bills.

So let me try again, Premier. If you say that it's actually a strong budget when, in fact, it is a very weak approach, please show me where you actually have your plan as Mr. Drummond called for. As you know, budget 2012 only has ministry-by-ministry lines for one year. Then you go into general categories, including a vague "other programs." Then, as of 2015, you actually have no numbers whatsoever. So not only is there no path towards balancing the budget; you don't even leave any bread crumbs for us to follow.

Premier, this is a weak response. Prove me wrong. Show me exactly where these ministry-by-ministry reductions take place through the balance of 2017.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague made it clear from the get-go that he was going to stand in opposition to this budget. He made that statement before he in fact had read the budget, Speaker.

Let me tell you what he's going to be voting against. He's going to be voting against ending subsidies that we can no longer afford for horse racing and the ONTC. He's voting against closing underutilized jails. He's voting against selling off government buildings that we no longer need and reducing our office space by one million square feet. He's voting against slowing down some capital projects and cancelling others. He's voting against freezing compensation costs, which saves us \$6 billion over three years. Those are the kinds of specific measures that he decided, a long time ago, that he's going to oppose, rather than participate in a productive, collaborative process on behalf of Ontario families with our government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Let me ask one last time, Premier—I've asked five times—for you to point out to me in your budget document exactly where your path to balance is. I'll repeat: Mr. Drummond said he wanted a line-by-line, ministry-by-ministry reduction for 2017. Now, I know that you've rejected the vast majority of the spending recommendations from Mr. Drummond, the restraint; Mr. Drummond's report went on the shelf pretty quick. I think you should do this. I think this should be in the budget. I think you should tell us exactly how you're going to get to balance.

The problem is, Premier, after 2014, you have no plan. It disappears into the fog, into the abyss. How can we

vote for a budget that has no plan to balance the books, no plan to create jobs? We stand for jobs, we stand for balancing the books, and that's where we stand on behalf of the people in the province of Ontario. Why don't you?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think it would be helpful were we to distill this to its essence. My honourable colleague is proposing we proceed with tax cuts we can't afford, tax cuts for corporations, and he would prefer to take that money out of our schools and our health care. That's not a choice that we support. That's not a choice that is supported by Ontario families. So we're going to protect full-day kindergarten, we're going to protect smaller classes, and we're going to protect our 30% off tuition grant. We're going to protect our standing as having the shortest surgical wait times in the country. We're going to protect our plan to move ahead with more home care for our seniors.

That's a fundamental choice that we are making. We stand for better schools, we stand for better health care, because that's where Ontario families stand.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. The Premier has stated that our ideas for the budget will add to the deficit. I just want to know if he can provide the figures or any accounting to back up his claim.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we can, but let's just understand. First of all, I want to once again thank my honourable colleague for engaging in a positive, collaborative process.

But my honourable colleague has proposed that we increase spending for child care, that we increase spending for home care, that we increase spending for hospitals, that we maintain our subsidy for the ONTC, that we maintain our subsidy for horse racing, and that we move ahead with an expensive tax benefit for home heating fuel, which, by the way, would benefit wealthiest Ontarians the most. When you add up all that list, we're talking about something that will, in fact, compromise our plan to balance the budget. These are new expenses. I say to my honourable colleague, we need to find a way to offset her proposals for new spending.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, we've been pretty up front about our plans and how we'd pay for them. We worked with economists and we used tools from StatsCan to ensure as accurate projections as possible. We worked very hard at that. In fact, the Minister of Finance agreed with our numbers before he started disagreeing with them.

So, can the Premier actually back up his claims?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think that there's a lot of common ground. For example, my honourable colleague recommended—and I think with good reason—that we not proceed with further corporate tax cuts at this point in time. I think that's sensible. In fact, that's something which the PCs did, I believe back in 2002, when they put

the brakes on further corporate tax reductions, given the economy of the time.

I'm sure my honourable colleague supports our determination to protect our schools and to protect our health care. I'm sure she believes that she will support our determination to move ahead with the Ontario child benefit.

But one of the concerns that I have, when I have yet to hear my colleague pronounce herself on this matter, is, does she support our public sector pay freeze? Because we can't balance our budget unless we realize the savings that come from a public sector pay freeze.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, nobody, from the Supreme Court to their own budget czar, Don Drummond, believes that those kinds of things work, so the Premier can keep climbing that tree if he wants, but we know that it doesn't work.

Nonetheless, we have heard from thousands of everyday Ontarians and they want to see balanced books in this province. There's no doubt about it. But they also want to see balanced plans to get there.

Now, around the world, governments are looking to the people who can afford to pay a little bit more so they can spare everyday families even more pain. In the US, President Obama has been very clear that addressing growing inequality and tax fairness is a key to America's recovery. I think it's the same thing here in Ontario. Does the Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I would caution my honourable colleague against comparing tax systems in other parts of the world with those to be found here in Ontario. Again, I would say to my honourable colleague as well that a very, very important aspect of our budget is the pay freeze that we're going to put on our public sector compensation. We're going to negotiate. We're going to negotiate firmly and fairly with our partners—our teachers, our doctors and those broadly in the public sector. Should we fail to arrive at a collective agreement that is in keeping with our plans, then we will not hesitate to take action in this very Legislature.

But I say to my honourable colleague, it's very important that Ontarians know exactly where she stands on this score. Is she or is she not in favour of a public sector pay freeze?

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is for the Premier. We put forward some pretty simple proposals to make this budget better. There is a modest income tax increase of two percentage points for Ontarians making more than half a million dollars, but there's a tax cut on home heating costs for Ontarians struggling to make ends meet.

So let me ask, does the Premier stand with millionaires or with folks struggling to pay their heating bills?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I say to my honourable colleague—and I ask her to take note that there may be at least some modicum of incoherence in terms of the two proposals that she has just talked about. She says, on the one hand, we need to tax the rich. But now we need to create a tax benefit when it comes to home heating costs that will disproportionately benefit the rich.

Who's got the biggest homes? Who's got the biggest fuel bills? It happens to be the rich. So I'm trying to reconcile these proposals here. On the one hand, we're going to tax the rich. On the other hand, we're going to give a disproportionate benefit to the rich.

I think what we need to do is to look to those places where we have in fact some common ground. We need to make sure, should we introduce new spending, that we can offset that against something else.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, what this Premier doesn't get is who has got the hardest time paying their bills in this province. That's what he doesn't get.

Our proposal protects essential services that this budget would cut, like hospitals and child care services. It will create savings by capping skyrocketing CEO salaries and extending whistle-blower protection. It creates jobs by rewarding job creators with a tax credit instead of no-strings-attached giveaways. It includes strategic considerations for the north and for stabilization of hard-hit industries. If you take our modest tax increase for the super-rich and set it against these real-world priorities, there are \$30 million in fact left to spare. So will the Premier stand with the hard-hit or with the super-rich?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I ask, why does my honourable colleague want to benefit, to use her language, the super-rich with taking the HST off home-heating fuel? Again, the people with the biggest homes, the people with the biggest fuel bills, are those super-rich. So I would ask my honourable colleague to take a look at the incoherence to be found among her very own proposals. I think we've got lots of common ground and I think we've got to make sure that we offset any new spending by finding some spending reductions inside the budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's disappointing that the Premier can't seem to see beyond the biggest homes when what we care about is the smaller homes, the people in everyday homes. That's the thing that we're worried about.

Our numbers are clear: We can bring some fairness to this budget without adding a single red cent to the deficit. Our priorities are clear. For the province to be financially secure, Ontario families must be feeling financially secure.

So one more time to the Premier: Do you stand by a budget that prices parents out of work, that cuts support to our most vulnerable neighbours, cuts local health care and does nothing for the 550,000 Ontarians looking for



work, or will you stand with New Democrats to bring a little more fairness to hard-working Ontarians?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I could not possibly support a budget the likes of which my honourable colleague just described, so instead we've introduced our own budget, which is markedly different from the one that she just described.

The fact of the matter is that we're going to achieve three overriding objectives on behalf of Ontarians. People know that we need to balance the budget, and we're taking until 2017-18 to do that. I think families in particular want us to protect their schools and their health care, and our budget takes great pains to achieve that objective as well. The other thing that we need to do, Speaker, is strengthen this economy. We do that with a specific commitment to 170,000 jobs. We're talking about a multi-billion-dollar jobs and prosperity fund to be informed by our new jobs and prosperity council.

We look forward to working with our honourable colleague in terms of shaping that up, but I think we're doing exactly what needs to be done.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** To the Minister of Finance: Minister, in Adam Radwanski's Globe and Mail column today, you admit that your government has a spending problem. You admit that you've allowed—in fact, you led—an uncontrollable, wasteful government spending spree. I think we should give him a round of applause. It took you 8.5 years to admit to your failures but only three years to run the province into the ground.

Will you now admit that your latest budget is just as much a failure? Come on, Minister. Let's continue this spontaneous streak of revelations and come clean. Will you address jobs and spending and fix your budget now?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House are working hard to achieve a balanced budget by 2017-18. We've had some very responsible recommendations brought forward by the third party. We have been working behind the scenes to achieve, year in and year out, the targets we have set out.

My local newspaper in Windsor, which isn't necessarily known to be a Liberal newspaper, had this to say about that party: "Since the Conservatives rejected the budget before even seeing it—an outrageously irresponsible act even by leader Tim Hudak's standards..." I agree with the Windsor Star on this one. It's a shame they're not participating. It's a shame they haven't read the document. It's a shame that they're not part of building a better future for Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Minister, your government hired an economist who spent about a year reviewing government departments and how they manage taxpayer money. Now you say you'll be unleashing accountants and auditors, yet more consultants, to look at government spending, and you have the gall to then wonder how it happens that after five years as chair of the treasury

board, you just "never got the feeling" that you were "systematically looking at things."

News flash, Minister: You never got that feeling because you never actually looked at things. Regardless of your apparent epiphany in the Globe and Mail piece today, you're still not looking at things.

What is it with that Liberal Party over there? What is it about the Liberal Party and consultants? Is it that you don't have anyone competent enough working for you, or is hiring consultants your party's version of a jobs strategy?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we've made significant gains in our schools and we have more to do. Outcomes are better in schools. There are more kids graduating, more kids going on to post-secondary. We've gone from the worst waiting lists in health care to the best. That's achievement. We are moving back to balance in the context of the worst downturn in history.

What are the Tories doing? I see again last night they nominated yet another candidate, Pam Hundal—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We're getting to that point where we're actually just—

*Interjections.*

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Putting a paper in front of your mouth does not stop you from getting—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** My disappointment is not in the fact that I have to stand from time to time; my disappointment is when people continue when I stand.

The second point that I want to make is that it's very difficult to bring any one member to order when both sides are heckling while both are giving an answer or both are giving a question.

Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They're out nominating candidates, and that's fine.

As to the question of consultants, in their last year in office the party opposite spent \$662 million. Even more recently, Andrew Boddington, Christine Elliott's leadership campaign manager, took health care dollars to lobby clients. Tom Long received millions—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'll take care of that part. New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Premier. Tomorrow, Alfred Apps will appear at the public accounts committee. As you know, the former president of the Liberal Party of Canada acted as Ornge's lawyer, lobbyist, spokesperson and financier. Reports indicate that he helped create the web of for-profit companies and helped get around salary disclosure rules, which ultimately earned his law firm millions of dollars.

Did Mr. Apps ever contact the Premier or anyone in the Premier's office on behalf of Ornge?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The honourable member is correct. Tomorrow, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts is going to be hearing from a number of witnesses. Actually, the first witness before it will be Peter Wallace, secretary to the cabinet, and then Alfred Apps, who is a counsel who, as the member points out, had done some work for Ornge. I think that committee, as all committees of the Legislature, is an excellent opportunity for members to ask questions about Mr. Apps's involvement with Ornge and put forward a whole list of questions as the ones that he's raised here and put the facts on the table.

All members on this side of the House are anxious to get to the bottom of this situation. That's why we supported a motion to have the public accounts committee look into Ornge. Unfortunately—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** The phones must have been off the hook that day in the Premier's office. He should check his voice mailbox for some communiqués.

In committee hearings earlier this month, at least one member of the Premier's staff conceded that Mr. Apps did reach out to them regarding Ornge. For a sceptical public, it's a bit much to believe that no one close to the Premier spoke with this well-connected Liberal, who was making a small fortune constructing this scheme.

Premier, who's been in the backrooms chatting with Alfie?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I find the member's questions a little strange. The simple fact of the matter is, this side of the House supported having hearings in front of public accounts. We had our health minister go forward. She was to be there an hour; she actually stayed two and a half hours.

We've put the facts on the table. As I said, tomorrow, there's a long list of witnesses, including the secretary to cabinet; Mr. Apps; Tim Shorthill, chief of staff to the Minister of Finance; Malcolm Bates, director of emergency health services in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care—and the list goes on.

But the simple fact is, we want to get to the bottom of it. We want to talk about the action that the Minister of Health and the government have taken in terms of Ornge. We're also anxious to understand about the opposition and the many, many communications they had with Ornge, a whole range of them that we've talked about here in the House, including briefings, including meetings, ones which they've neglected to raise when they've asked questions here in the Legislature.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, I know that you and the Premier

have been clear about your commitment to full-day kindergarten. Our youngest learners are the foundation that the future of our province will be built on.

I've heard from my constituents in Don Valley East that they're so pleased with our decision to move forward with full-day kindergarten in the face of these tough economic times. They know that full-day learning gives their children the best possible start while saving them thousands of dollars in child care costs each year.

Will the minister tell this House why the government chose to protect full-day kindergarten, especially given our deficit?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thanks to my colleague from Don Valley East for raising this issue and for the advocacy that he has done for many years on behalf of families and education in Don Valley East.

We recently heard about a study conducted in Peel region, Speaker, and I want to share the results of that study with the House. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, otherwise known as OISE, did a study about the effect of full-day kindergarten on students. They confirmed what our government and experts have been saying all along. Students with access to full-day kindergarten have shown a higher level of skills across the board—better performance in vocabulary, reading comprehension, mathematics, complex drawing skills—than those students enrolled in half-day. Small muscle and large muscle development has improved. They've grown a greater aptitude in regard to non-violent problem solving.

I think what we're demonstrating through this study is that all-day kindergarten is great for Ontario students, and that's what we're focused on.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister as well.

I know that full-day learning is popular with both parents and educators, and I'm pleased to hear about this study which confirms the real, tangible benefits that children and their families are getting from full-day kindergarten.

I constantly hear from people in my riding of Don Valley East that their local schools are some of the most important things in their communities.

There are also some folks that I've talked to in my constituency who remember what the schools were like when the PC government was in power.

Mr. Speaker, these are tough economic times. What will the minister do to make sure that our schools don't end up like they were when the Leader of the Opposition's party was in power?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Leadership is about making choices. Despite challenging economic times, we are making the choices to protect the gains that we've made in education. We will keep funding levels for grants for student needs stable, and we're making a clear choice about what our investment priorities should be, like full-day kindergarten, smaller class sizes, keeping teachers in



the classroom, and focusing our efforts, energies and dollars on the classroom experience.

It's our choice to protect teaching jobs, to protect the classroom experience, and I know, Speaker, that that is what Ontario families expect of us—those in Don Valley East, those in Etobicoke—Lakeshore in the community that I'm privileged to represent. Ontario families want us to put their children first, just like they do, Speaker, and that's exactly what our budget does with the investments in education that we're proud to be voting on in this budget.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Minister of Health: On page 38 of the Auditor General's report on the scandal at Ornge, he makes reference to the solemn consequences of the mismanagement at Ornge. He says this: "We found that Ornge internally reported 20 'significant patient adverse events' in 2009-10 to its board of directors, including some that involved patient deaths."

I ask the minister this: When did she first find out about this—because we're sure that she must have known about it before we did in the Auditor General's report—and did she call in the coroner to do a full investigation of these cases?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As the member opposite well knows, I became aware of the Auditor General's report on October 27. I immediately took the action that has had demonstrable results. In fact, the member opposite has even described this as "aggressive changes and improvements at Ornge." We took that action for many reasons, no reason more paramount than patient safety.

I'm very pleased that Dr. Barry McLellan, the CEO of Sunnybrook Hospital—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** A very fine doctor.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —and a very fine physician—in fact, an extraordinary reputation he carries with him, that he has earned—is on the board at Ornge, Speaker, and he is heading up the safety oversight at Ornge. There is no finer person in this province, in this country, who could take on that challenge.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, Dr. Barry McLellan is not the coroner of this province. I find this most disturbing.

The minister boasts about calling in the OPP upon finding out about financial irregularities at Ornge. The Auditor General makes it very clear that there are serious operational issues at Ornge that affect patients' lives. Ornge failed, according to the Auditor General, to provide service for 7,500 requests during 2009 and 2010. Of those, 4,700 were emergency on-scene calls that Ornge did not meet.

1110

How many more lives have to be put at risk before this minister calls in the coroner to get to the bottom of this? Will the minister acknowledge that, one more time, she has failed to provide the proper oversight, to take the

proper actions? And, given that, will she admit that she's not capable of handling this file and will she step aside?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am very proud of the legislation that we have introduced to increase transparency and oversight at Ornge. I am hopeful that the member opposite will support this legislation enthusiastically, because it addresses issues that have been raised about the oversight at Ornge. It will give us more power, more tools. Among those tools, we'll have the power that we currently have with hospitals, and that is to send in an investigator, to send in a supervisor, in those extreme cases where public safety is at risk. I look forward to the support of this legislation as we move forward.

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** To the Minister of Economic Development: Yesterday, in the committee of general government, we amended the government's bill to create a southwestern economic development fund. Our amendments, which the government members argued against, give local representatives a say over funding decisions, establish new accountability measures for public money and help take politics out of the program. Is the government still committed to moving the bill to third reading debate so we can start creating those badly needed jobs in this hard-hit region?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to begin by thanking the member for his work at committee, for working with us in terms of his support for the southwest Ontario development fund, and for some of the ideas and amendments that he brought forward and that his party brought forward. We're looking very carefully at the amendments and the impact on the southwest Ontario development fund. But as I've told the member from day one, we're open to good ideas. We're open to ideas that are going to create jobs in southwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario.

But in contrast, we're very disappointed with the official opposition. They did not offer ideas; they did not move amendments. They simply decided, just like they're doing with our budget, to vote against it. They decided just to go home, not be involved, not take a position. We'll stand with the NDP and fight for jobs any day, in contrast to the position of the official opposition, which is against jobs in southwestern Ontario and against jobs in eastern Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm glad the minister is supportive of our ideas and our amendments. We are with you on saying that southwestern Ontario has been hard hit by massive job losses in the manufacturing sector, and New Democrats want to see funding flowing to worthwhile projects as soon as possible. Targeted support for job creation is a good idea and desperately needed in

communities like Windsor, London, Chatham and Sarnia. My question, which you didn't answer, is the following: When will the government bring Bill 11 up for third reading debate?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** That's a question the House leaders obviously will talk about. But what I will say is that I'm very, very enthused about moving forward with this legislation—of course, it will be the will of the House that will determine the fate of the legislation ultimately—because it worked in eastern Ontario, Mr. Speaker: 11,900 jobs created in eastern Ontario as a result of the eastern Ontario development fund.

We want to see the same kind of job creation in southwestern Ontario, and as I said, we welcome the ideas from the third party. We're very disappointed in the lack of ideas from the official opposition, who just decided, plain and simple, that they would not be supporting jobs in southwestern Ontario, not be supporting jobs in eastern Ontario, just like they're not supporting a budget that does the most important thing we can do to create jobs in this province, and that's to get our books in balance by 2017-18.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. Minister, in Mississauga and across the province, jobs are being created in fields like manufacturing and life sciences. Banks, accountants and business advisers have told me that businesses are growing and they're starting to invest. Yet any scan of the news shows lingering uncertainty in the global economy. Our province has differentiated itself from other jurisdictions in the successful manner that Ontarians have enhanced our competitiveness in a fiercely competitive global economy. Would the minister describe how such measures are working for Ontario and in cities like Mississauga and Toronto?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This government's economic plan is working. The result is a more competitive Ontario, a more competitive Toronto and a more competitive greater Toronto area. Don't just take my word for it, Mr. Speaker. A report released by KPMG ranked Toronto as the second most competitive major city in North America for business investment. The same study ranked Chicago 21st and New York 29th.

On a similar note, the president of the University of Toronto, David Naylor, recently told the Toronto Board of Trade that Toronto is the lowest-risk city in the world for employers, is ranked second in cities of opportunity, and has the fourth-highest rate of entrepreneurship in the entire OECD. Furthermore, Toronto has the top financial services sector, the top ICT sector, the top life sciences cluster, the top auto sector and the top food and beverage sector. This is not happening by accident. Our measures to keep Ontario competitive and open for business are working for Toronto and working for Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, companies say that tax reforms like the HST and our government's reductions in

the corporate tax rate are improving business competitiveness. They make that statement by locating in Ontario, expanding their operations and sales, and hiring people. The 2012 budget contains a freeze on corporate tax rates as Ontario eliminates its deficit from the recession. The Leader of the Opposition has indicated that his party wants to keep cutting taxes while the budget isn't balanced, while most economists are saying that Ontario has gone far enough with corporate tax cuts and that our top priority should be eliminating the deficit. Minister, would further reductions in corporate taxes hurt Ontario's competitiveness?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This government has moved Ontario from an uncompetitive corporate tax jurisdiction to one that's now one of the most competitive in all of Canada and all of North America. Our economic plan is working. Ontario gained 46,000 net jobs in March.

What business leaders and economists have told us is that the best thing we can do to strengthen our economy and create jobs is to balance our books, which our budget does, Mr. Speaker, by 2017-18. The worst thing we could do right now for jobs and our economy is not to support the budget and to cause an unnecessary and costly election.

It's time for the Leader of the Opposition to listen to what Ontarians want. Do what's best for our economy, do what's best for creating jobs, and support this budget.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Rob Leone:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, you know that our party will be voting against this budget because there's no jobs plan and you do nothing to steer our province out of the \$30-billion deficit path that you brought us under. Surprisingly, you, along with your finance minister, are accusing our party of electioneering during question period today and yesterday. Well, that's a little rich, Mr. Speaker, considering that yesterday they spent money placing robocalls in my riding and for the member of Burlington's riding. Premier, were you made aware of these robocalls and will you take responsibility for them?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have now done a dozen telephone town halls with over 100,000 people on them, and they want this budget passed. They want the initiatives we brought forward, Mr. Speaker, because they realize it's a full response to challenging times. We are going to call in to opposition ridings because the people in those ridings don't want another election. Your nomination meeting is what—two weeks from now? Mr. Speaker, I don't know why he's being nominated at this point in time. He should be here in the Legislature, working to find a balance in the budget, to work with us, to do what the NDP have been doing to bring forward constructive ideas to build a better future for Ontario. Cancel your nomination meeting. Let's make this Legislature work. Please, we just had an election—

*Interjection.*



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**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would like to offer the member from Thornhill a caution on the way he named the Minister of Finance.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I hope you just hear what I asked.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It's a good thing the Premier has appointed the minister for robocalls, and hopefully he hasn't hired Pierre Poutine as his chief of staff.

Premier, you know we can't vote for this budget. You know it has failed to come up with a jobs plan. It has failed to bring down the government deficit. It has failed to rein in government spending. These are the reasons that this party is not going to vote for your budget.

Premier, Minister of Finance or minister of robocalls, if you're at least going to spend some money placing robocalls in my riding, at least be honest with people. Tell them the real reason why we're going into an election: because your leadership has failed this province.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, those calls were telling the people of Cambridge that, on page 40 of the budget, we're confirming funding officially for the first time for a new Cambridge hospital—and you're voting against it.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I think we'll move to a new question.

### ADDICTION SERVICES

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Substance abuse in First Nations is no secret. Entire communities are battling addiction, and a sense of hopelessness is prevailing.

Two months ago, the government delisted OxyContin without a clear addictions and treatment strategy in place that would help communities manage the impact of this decision. First Nations have been asking for an addiction strategy for years. As recently as two months ago, when you delisted OxyContin, Minister, I asked what the plan was.

Minister, we're still waiting. What is the plan?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member opposite for this very important question. I know that all of us are firmly committed to be there for people who choose this opportunity to address their addiction.

The delisting of OxyContin and the replacement of that with OxyNEO we know is changing the landscape of addiction in many of our communities, most especially in First Nations communities. I want the member opposite and other members of this House to know that I have convened a remarkable panel of people, many of them from the First Nations communities in the north.

We are taking the steps, the recommendations that they are making to us, including, for example, sending an additional doctor to Meno Ya Win in Sioux Lookout to support the methadone treatment program. The Ontario Telemedicine Network is stepping up their ability to support people as they go through this addiction—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Months ago, the community of Cat Lake declared a state of emergency, looking for help dealing with the crisis in their community and across the north. This week, children in Cat Lake wrote their family members who are in the grips of addiction, saying, "We don't know what to do to help you stop doing" drugs.

The minister and experts know which treatment and services can help, if only we had the political will to provide these programs. How much longer will these communities be forced to wait?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We are taking significant action on this very important issue. It's very important that Health Canada step up and play their part as well.

One of the additional steps we have taken is to fast-track the approval for Suboxone. Suboxone is a medication for people who have tried methadone unsuccessfully. It's another tool in addiction treatment. So I am pleased to say that the exceptional access program has fast-tracked Suboxone, so now people are getting an answer within five business days as to whether or not they are eligible for this particular drug. There are many initiatives under way. I would ask the member opposite if she would be willing to have a meeting so I can review with her the initiatives happening in response.

### FOREST FIREFIGHTING

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, as you're aware, last year's forest fire season was particularly challenging in Ontario. In 2011, there were significantly more fires in the province than the year before and a much greater area was affected. We are already receiving reports of small fires in Ontario's northwest and northeast, and many people are concerned that this year's warmer weather and below-normal snowfall may lead to another busy season.

While it may be still too early to predict how this year's weather will affect the 2012 fire season, Ontarians are thinking of the safety of their family, friends, and neighbouring communities. In fact, this week is Wildfire Prevention Week, and as part of this week, the ministry is reminding people of springtime fire hazards and the steps they can take to keep their homes and properties safe. Could the minister advise us on the steps his ministry is preparing to take in the upcoming wildfire season to keep Ontarians safe?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I want to thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie for raising this very important question. I think all Ontarians should know and be very proud of the fact that Ontario's expertise and success in fighting wildfires is world-renowned, and certainly I want to assure the members of this House that we are

absolutely ready for the upcoming fire season, prepared to fight forest fires as early as we need to, keeping a very close eye on the weather conditions, as they do change from week to week across the province.

Let me say, as well, that in addition to our air fleet—14 water bombers, 13 helicopters, 12 fire detection aircraft—we have approximately 750 fire rangers working for us, and we have available to us 320 more firefighters from the private sector. We have incredibly strong partnerships in place with other Canadian provinces and US states to assist Ontario as we get into a state of crisis. So we're ready, we're committed and we're going to have another season where we protect the people of the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** Minister, thank you for updating members of the House on preparations under way in your ministry.

Last year, frequent lightning storms combined with hot, dry and often windy weather conditions resulted in a large number of fires that grew quickly in size, making them particularly difficult and costly to fight. As April marks the official start of forest fire season in the province, and with the initial reports of small fires already, my constituents are raising questions about the resources that we are providing to ensure that our pilots are prepared to fight these fires.

Minister, last January our government selected Sault Ste. Marie as the location for a new \$6.2-million state-of-the-art training centre for pilots and maintenance engineers on the CL-415 heavy water bombers that are used to fight forest fires in northern Ontario. Could you please elaborate on the training and safety measures the province has in place to ensure public safety continues to be our government's priority, and specifically how our government will respond to extraordinary challenges, if necessary?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** It really was a great question, Speaker. The member is right. Certainly last year's fire season was particularly difficult—I think our second worst in terms of the amount of hectares that burned. We did have very dry weather, particularly in the summer-time. This year also, there have been some early starts.

Our investment, as he mentions, in a state-of-the-art flight simulator training facility in Sault Ste. Marie is helping to enhance the forest fire response system, and it does mean that our pilots will be even better prepared to protect Ontarians, our communities and natural resources from the devastation of wildfires. No longer will we have our highly skilled pilots forced to find that training in other jurisdictions. So that's really great news.

Last week, I had the pleasure of visiting the northwest region aviation and forest fire management centre in Dryden, accompanied by my colleague from Kenora—Rainy River, and I was presented with my first opportunity to meet with staff and understand the remarkable work they do.

Preparations are there, they're under way for this year's fire season, and we are prepared for whatever the fire season holds for us here in the province of Ontario.

1130

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Minister of Education. As the province faces a \$30-billion deficit and cuts to education, do you think it's appropriate for a quarter of a million dollars to be spent on international travel by school board trustees?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance, first of all, to be clear that in the grants for student needs this year, we have put out grants that are stable, that maintain the additional investments we have made since 2003. And I think it's important for Ontario families to know that we continue to roll out investments in all-day kindergarten. As a result, the Ministry of Education budget will be going up by 1.7%.

But to speak directly to the issue that I know the member is raising, which is with respect to York Region District School Board travel expenses internationally, she would know from having read the newspapers that I have made it absolutely clear that this is not acceptable and that I have spoken to Chairperson Anna DeBartolo, to encourage her to take a very close look at how the monies are spent and that all international travel coming out of York region board is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer. Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Let me just read through the list and see if people think this is appropriate. On May 14, 16 staff went to Finland at the cost of \$30,000. May 2011, 20 staff and two trustees went to Finland again, for \$42,000. Then there was a July 2011 trip; 21 staff went to London, England, for \$50,000. November 2011, two trustees went to New Zealand, for \$10,000. Of course, in October, a year ago, four staff and a trustee went to Finland, for \$92,000. Let me just say this: There was another scheduled trip—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Let me finish, because in May 2012, upcoming, is a cost for another \$35,000.

My question is this: She addressed York region, and this is where this occurred. Why is she not banning international travel, at a time of austerity, in all school boards? Why is she not making sure her ministry officials are making sure education dollars, which are scarce, are actually going into classrooms instead of people's passports?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** As I said, on March 15, I spoke to Chairperson Anna DeBartolo to encourage her to take a very close look at the budget. Following that, the York region put in a six-month moratorium on international travel. Let me also say what director Ken Thurston had to say following the very frank and direct conversations that I had with Ms. DeBartolo: "Given the fiscal realities of this province, it's important that education funding goes to protecting the gains we've made in classrooms."

I know that our school boards are partners with us in delivering strong, quality public education in Ontario.



I'm proud of the work that our school boards do. They play an important role in communities, and they've taken very seriously the conversation that I have had with them that we need to use dollars in our classrooms.

### BLOOD DONATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Canadian Blood Services has just closed its last Ontario dedicated plasma donor clinic, located in Thunder Bay. They said that these Ontarians' donations are no longer needed, thanks to the availability of surplus plasma products from the States. But in 2004, Ontario signed on to a plan to increase Canadian content in plasma products, recognizing the importance of domestic collection. Can the minister explain what her office and herself have done so far to protect the capacity of our not-for-profit blood system here in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This is an issue that has been raised by members of our caucus. I have met with Canadian Blood Services to discuss this particular issue. The reality is, the demand for plasma is decreasing. That is in part because plasma that was thrown out because it had expired can last longer now, so the demand for plasma is decreasing.

The Thunder Bay Canadian Blood Services was the only place where only plasma was collected and not whole blood. This was a difficult decision of Canadian Blood Services; they made the decision. They, like everyone, are having to go through line by line to make the decisions that get us the best value for money. I regret this decision but it is a decision of Canadian Blood Services—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The safety and stability of Ontario plasma products are at stake and the minister has a responsibility to ensure the strength of an Ontario not-for-profit blood system.

Ontarians still remember the tragedy from the Arkansas prison tainted-blood scandal. One of the victims of that scandal attended the rally in Thunder Bay last week to add his voice and to oppose this closure.

Will the minister listen to the voices of the people of Thunder Bay and worried Ontarians throughout this province, and pressure the Canadian Blood Services to reopen the Thunder Bay site?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am very concerned that the member opposite is raising issues around the safety of the product without actually having that knowledge.

Speaker, I can assure the people of this province that they have absolutely no cause to be concerned about the safety of these blood products. In fact, you will remember, Speaker, that the Canadian Blood Services was set up specifically in response to the tainted-blood scandal. I can assure you that the patients of this province will be unaffected by this decision.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Finance on a point of order.

### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I rise to correct the record of my own statement in the House. In response to the member for Cambridge, I referenced a new hospital in Cambridge. In fact, it's a major new expansion that's been long awaited in that community and I hope the member and his party—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On the point of order, the minister has the right to correct his own record.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm delighted to introduce Susan Gapka. It's a day of a momentous win for the trans health lobby, and she's here to celebrate.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My guests are about to arrive: Rowena Pinto from the Canadian Cancer Society; Mark Holland from the Heart and Stroke Foundation; Phil Jansson and Kale Brown from Flavour...Gone!—this is a student group; Michael Perley, director of the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco; Joanne Di Nardo from the Canadian Cancer Society; Elizabeth Harvey from the Ontario Lung Association; and Sarah Butson and Monica Sarkar from the Youth Advocacy Training Institute of the Ontario Lung Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### LINCOLN ALEXANDER

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** In January, I had the pleasure and good fortune of being one of about 100 people at a Burlington party celebrating the 90th birthday of the Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, lovingly known to most as Linc.

Linc was, of course, Canada's first black MP, elected in 1968 as a Progressive Conservative to represent the riding of Hamilton West; the first black federal cabinet minister, as Minister of Labour in the Clark government; and Ontario's Lieutenant Governor from 1985 to 1991.

At that party, Linc was an inspiring presence, as always. Two months later, we were all given pause by news that Linc had been recuperating at Hamilton General Hospital after undergoing an operation to repair a ruptured aneurysm in his abdomen. This weekend, we learned that Linc has now left intensive care, and his recovery is going so well that he could be released from Hamilton General next week. This is, to say the least, tremendous news.

Linc, his wife, Marni Beal-Alexander, and his family hope that he will recover completely enough to be able to greet the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall when they visit Ontario next month as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. It would certainly be most fitting.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I would like to add to the chorus of support and extend our heartfelt wishes to Linc for a sound and speedy recovery.

### GENDER IDENTITY

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The Trans Lobby Group members are thrilled—and Susan Gapka's here to share that with us—that the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal has ruled that the surgical requirement for a change in the record of birth on legal documents is discriminatory towards trans people. A decision just released, *XY vs. the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services*, confirmed what trans people have been saying all along—and I'm going to quote Susan Gapka. She says, "Requiring sexual reassignment surgery ... is differential treatment based upon a personal characteristic; that is, that trans people are treated differently and face harassment and discrimination when their legal documents do not match how they present in their everyday lives." Gapka, chair of the Trans Lobby Group, added, "Now we can move forward with remedy which will provide social inclusion for many trans people...."

I might say that none of this would have been necessary if we had gender identity and gender expression in the Ontario Human Rights Code—Toby's Law, tabled for the fourth time, and we hope it will be discussed in second reading debate on May 10. So on that day, hopefully we will have leapt over the one remaining hurdle in the province of Ontario to true trans inclusion and the end of any discrimination against our trans brothers and sisters.

Congratulations to them all, and here's hoping we move forward.

### ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** This past February marked the 67th anniversary of the end of Canada's participation in the Italian campaign, one of the longest battles of World War II. Our Canadian soldiers played a vital role in the 20-month-long campaign, which led to the liberation of Italy.

The Italian campaign began on the morning of July 10, 1943, when Canadian and British troops landed on the southern tip of Sicily. After four weeks of battling the Germans, Canadian soldiers crossed the Strait of Messina, landed in Calabria, Italy's mainland, and engaged the Germans in fierce battles.

Our Canadian soldiers fought in Italy from July 10, 1943, until February 25, 1945. More than 93,000 Canadians fought on the front lines of the Italian campaign, with nearly 6,000 Canadians ultimately sacrificing their

own lives to protect our values, our freedom and our peace. The soldiers of the Italian campaign were among the more than one million Canadians who served during World War II.

Speaker, most Canadian soldiers who died in the Italian campaign are buried in 18 Commonwealth cemeteries throughout Italy and commemorated on the Cassino memorial. We honour the selfless commitment of all Canadians who gave their lives in service to Canada. We honour every war veteran who remains with us today and honour and support those who come after them. The loyalty and sacrifice of Canadian soldiers continues to remind us of what it means to be Canadian.

### KILLALOE PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** During constituency week, I had the pleasure of visiting Killaloe Public School, which is one of 10 finalists in a contest sponsored by Majesta Paper Products called the Majesta "Trees of Knowledge" competition.

Killaloe is a lovely village in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, only 13 miles from my home, which has always exhibited tremendous community spirit. The fact that KPS, with only about 110 students, has made it this far in a national competition is a testament to that community spirit.

In making their submission, Killaloe Public School had to design an outdoor learning space that would help educate their students and the public to the importance of working in concert with nature and understanding the benefits of a healthy natural environment.

I want to thank Principal Krista Recroskie and Lyndsey Mask, a volunteer, for inviting me to their school to learn more about their project. I had the opportunity to view a very well-done video and review the application, which was meticulously prepared. Incidentally, the video was produced by the students themselves and was most enjoyable.

The contest will be determined by a cross-Canada vote between now and May 11. If successful, Killaloe will receive \$20,000 towards the building of their customized outdoor classroom. Between now and then, everyone eligible can vote once a day for the school of their choice. I'll be encouraging friends and family to vote for the Killaloe Public School's submission and would further encourage all members of this Legislature to do the same. They can do so by going to [www.majesta.com](http://www.majesta.com) and following the prompts. Let's all get together and vote for Killaloe and bring another Canadian champion to rural Ontario.

### TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I rise here today to recognize the extraordinary courage of two fellow citizens and their heroic efforts during a terrible accident in my riding of Richmond Hill.

On March 27, as flames began to engulf a vehicle that had struck a brick stanchion, two heroic residents,



Andrea Belviso and Leslie Bonyhadi, came to the rescue of a stranger without a moment of hesitation.

Ms. Belviso approached the accident with her four-year-old son in the car. Parking her vehicle at a safe distance, she rushed to the scene while dialling 911. At that point, Mr. Bonyhadi arrived on the scene, and together, the duo decided to act before it might have been too late. Mr. Bonyhadi describes how they were able to support each other, braving the flames and smoke to reach the car and rescue the unconscious driver.

Due to the astonishing courage and fortitude of two ordinary citizens, one life was saved. They were able to summon the courage to run to this horrific scene and try their best to save the victim's life.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to acknowledge the courageous efforts of Ms. Belviso and Mr. Bonyhadi as they willingly placed their own lives at risk in an effort to save a stranger's life.

#### JOHN BRADLEY

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my great pleasure to rise today to recognize one of Chatham-Kent's most accomplished families, the family of Mr. John Bradley.

1510

John Bradley came to Chatham from Toledo, Ohio, and established Bradley Farms in 1912. The ensuing decades saw the founding of the Bradley Marshes Hunting Lodge, the building of Chatham's first strip mall, residential projects, including the area's first high-rise towers, and perhaps their most lasting legacy, a commitment to drawing tourism to Chatham-Kent.

With the establishment of the world-famous Wheels Inn in 1972, the Bradleys succeeded in bringing tourism business to an undiscovered gem of a town. The Wheels featured an indoor atrium and an amusement park, to the delight of families and their children.

John Bradley was also a generous spirit who founded the Chatham Kent Community Foundation to support local priorities.

I also want to recognize his son, Dean Bradley, and his family for their hard work in keeping John's legacy alive.

Now, to honour the contributions of the Bradley family in Chatham, it's only fitting that the new Chatham convention centre be named the John D. Bradley Convention Centre. Already operational and with an expected grand opening this spring, the centre will stand at the same site where the Wheels Inn once stood.

I wish the family the greatest success in continuing to stand for the best Chatham has to offer.

#### ANTI-TOBACCO LEGISLATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Speaker, today I want to remind my colleagues of a bill that we—you and I—introduced in 2008. The bill banned the sale of single-sale flavoured cigarillos.

Although this bill passed, by the time it was enacted, the tobacco companies had found loopholes. They

already had so-called new products, but they were not really new, Mr. Speaker. It was the exact same products as before: same flavour, same smell, same packaging, same price, same marketing; they just made them a little bit bigger so that they would circumvent the act. The tobacco industry recognizes a money-maker when they see one and they were not about to let the Legislative Assembly stand between them and billions of dollars of profit.

So today I will be introducing a new bill. This bill will be very simple: Ban all flavoured tobacco products in Ontario. Whether you smoke it, chew it, spit it, snuff it, it doesn't matter; if it is flavoured and it has tobacco, it won't be allowed in Ontario. Plus, we will ban new tobacco products from entering Ontario. There are a number of new products being test-marketed right now in the US; some of them are already for sale. You know about those little Tic Tacs, the little mints? They're now made out of nicotine. Same thing with the melt—same thing with the lozenges.

A very simple bill: Ban flavoured tobacco and ban new products. I hope everybody will support it.

#### ALANNA BRAY-LOUGHEED

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Burloak Canoe Club's winning tradition has made it a world leader in developing the best athletes at the local, the national and the Olympic levels. Cain, Oldershaw and Van Koeverden are just a few of the names that members may recognize. So it's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature this afternoon to recognize a young paddler from Oakville who is beginning to amass a growing list of accomplishments at the highest level of national and international competition.

Alanna Bray-Lougheed is a Quest for Gold recipient. She trains out of the Burloak Canoe Club, she's the winner of the K-1 200-metre event at the junior world championships last year, and she'll be representing Canada this weekend in Brazil. Alanna is part of a team of 10 athletes competing at the 2012 Pan American Canoe Sprint Championships in Rio de Janeiro. She was selected for the team based on her quick trial results at a competition in Lake Pickett, Florida, just a few weeks ago. Alanna is going to be competing in the K-1 race on the same course that's going to be used for the Brazil Summer Olympics in 2016.

On behalf of the House, I want to congratulate Alanna for her efforts and wish her well and the entire team good luck and best wishes of this House as they compete in Rio this weekend, representing all proud Canadians.

#### GORD RENWICK

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Cambridge native Gord Renwick, who was selected as a recipient of the Order of Hockey in Canada. The Order of Hockey in Canada recognizes individuals who have played prominent roles in

developing and growing the game in Canada. Mr. Renwick is being inducted this year alongside Jean Beliveau, Cassie Campbell-Pascall, Gordie Howe and Wayne Gretzky.

Mr. Renwick not only was one of the original builders of the Galt Hornets senior hockey organization in my riding but was also president of the Hornets during which time the Hornets won two Allan Cups. Mr. Renwick was also instrumental in establishing the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, the CAHA—now Hockey Canada—and the International Ice Hockey Federation. He also served as president of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association and as a board member and vice-president of the IIHF.

This honour is well-deserved and further illustrates the deep roots that the game of hockey has in the communities of Cambridge and North Dumfries. I'd like to congratulate Mr. Renwick on his award.

### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just wanted to correct the record. Earlier I said the Ontario Supreme Court. I meant the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. That is a point of order, and all members are allowed to correct their own record.

### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Nepean—Carleton has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Education concerning international travel for school boards. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 20, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 to require carbon monoxide detectors in certain residential buildings / *Projet de loi 20, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment pour exiger l'installation de détecteurs de monoxyde de carbone dans certains immeubles d'habitation*, the title of which is amended to read An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 to require carbon monoxide detectors in certain residential buildings / *Projet de loi 20, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la*

protection contre l'incendie pour exiger l'installation de détecteurs de monoxyde de carbone dans certains immeubles d'habitation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Therefore, the bill will be ordered for third reading.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 11, An Act respecting the continuation and establishment of development funds in order to promote regional economic development in eastern and south-western Ontario / *Projet de loi 11, Loi concernant la prorogation et la création de fonds de développement pour promouvoir le développement économique régional dans l'Est et le Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario*.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The bill therefore is ordered for third reading.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### HILI ENTERPRISES LTD. ACT, 2012

Ms. Damerla moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr4, An Act to revive Hili Enterprises Ltd.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

#### COUTU GOLD MINES LIMITED ACT, 2012

Mr. Oraziatti moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr1, An Act to revive Coutu Gold Mines Limited.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

1520

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.



SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO  
AMENDMENT ACT (PROHIBITING  
FLAVOURED TOBACCO,  
NEW TOBACCO PRODUCTS  
AND SMOKELESS TOBACCO), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE  
(INTERDICTION DU TABAC AROMATISÉ,  
DES NOUVEAUX PRODUITS DU TABAC  
ET DU TABAC SANS FUMÉE)

M<sup>me</sup> Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to prohibit certain tobacco products / Projet de loi 66, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée pour interdire certains produits du tabac.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**M<sup>re</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, this bill is quite simple. In 2008, we had passed Bill 124. The spirit of Bill 124 was to protect our youth from the marketing done to them with flavoured tobacco products. This bill unfortunately had a few loopholes, so I am now introducing a new bill. In this new bill, we will cease to have flavoured tobacco products, whether it be smoke or smokeless tobacco products, in Ontario, as well as ban any new tobacco products from entering the province of Ontario. I think this is an important bill to protect our youth from becoming the next generation of smokers. I thank you for your support.

CHILDREN'S LAW REFORM  
AMENDMENT ACT (RELATIONSHIP  
WITH GRANDPARENTS), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
PORTANT RÉFORME DU DROIT  
DE L'ENFANCE (RELATION  
AVEC LES GRANDS-PARENTS)

Mr. Craitor moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 67, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child's grandparents / Projet de loi 67, Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance en ce qui concerne la relation entre un enfant et ses grands-parents.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure today that I'm announcing first reading of the Children's Law Reform Amendment Act (Relationship with Grandparents), affectionately known as the grandparents' rights bill.

I want to thank the MPP from the official opposition party, from Whitby—Oshawa, for acting as a co-sponsor. I also want to thank the MPP from the third party, from Parkdale—High Park, for co-sponsoring the bill. Thank you to both of them.

In summary, the bill amends the Children's Law Reform Act to prohibit a person entitled to custody of a child from creating or maintaining unreasonable barriers to the formation and continuation of personal relationships between the child and the child's grandparents. The bill sets out the needs and circumstances of a child that the court must consider in determining the best interests of a child, and the emotional ties between the child and the child's grandparents and the willingness of each person applying for custody to facilitate with the child's grandparents. Thank you.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Unanimous consent has been asked. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 34 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some grumbling but I didn't hear a no, so I think we'll proceed.

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege for me to rise in the House today to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Thirty years ago today, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II proclaimed into force the Constitution Act, 1982. This act included the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This initiative was the result of the grand vision for Canada and Ontario from the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau and his Minister of Justice, Jean Chrétien.

A strong belief in the protection of individual rights, keeping government out of the bedrooms of the nation and respecting individual differences was their primary premise. By working together with their counterparts from different political parties and different parts of this

country—namely Bill Davis, Conservative Premier of Ontario at the time; Roy McMurtry, Ontario's Attorney General at the time; and Roy Romanow, the NDP Attorney General for Saskatchewan—they were able to overcome challenges and obstacles put before them during the negotiating process, and they are truly three great Canadians.

Culminating in the Queen's signature on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a groundbreaking human rights initiative came to fruition. It was the product of an all-party co-operation, an excellent and tangible example of what we can accomplish by working together rather than as adversaries.

For the first time, Speaker, the fundamental freedoms and rights of everyone in Canada were guaranteed. There was great anticipation and excitement on Parliament Hill at the signing ceremony, as many of us who watched the television production that day will attest to. Thousands of people of all ages and walks of life, from coast to coast to coast, joined together on the front lawn to celebrate this momentous occasion.

We can remember times in our past prior to the charter when fundamental legal rights were sacrificed at times without justification. As the Toronto Star editorial of last Sunday, April 15, so aptly pointed out, "Think of it as a shield against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, adopted 30 years ago this week, protects us all. Time and again, Canadians have invoked it to challenge overbearing government power, to expand freedoms including that of free speech and of the press, to right wrongs and to remedy inequality. It is one of our great treasures."

Over the past 30 years, we have seen many examples of how the charter has led to improvements in the lives of people and how it has benefitted society at large. Let's just consider a few examples. Before the charter, aboriginal women lost their Indian status if they married non-aboriginal men. Since the charter, their descendants are reclaiming their rights. Aboriginal and treaty rights were guaranteed for the first time in the Constitution Act of 1982.

As a result of the charter, Ontario's Family Law Act was deemed discriminatory as it failed to impose spousal support obligations on same-sex couples, as it did on opposite-sex couples. As a result, legislation was amended to extend benefits to same-sex couples on the same basis as provided to opposite-sex couples.

1530

I hope that our federal government celebrates this day as we do here in Ontario. April 17, 1982, ushered in a new era of tolerance and inclusiveness that should be celebrated as it was on that day on Parliament Hill.

The charter ensures that the rule of law promotes a more just society, where all people are recognized as people and as sharing fundamental values based upon freedom, respect and tolerance. The charter is essential in our society because of the principles that it embodies, and also because it allows anyone to call on its protections through ordinary courts and tribunals.

In the 30 years since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was adopted, our province and our country have come a long way. I'm proud that the protection of human rights is a fundamental principle in our province as well. Here in Ontario, we firmly recognize that all people have a right to live free from discrimination, inequality and intolerance. In Ontario, we have not just relied on the charter to build equality but on other ways as well.

Our government has taken the most significant steps to strengthen our Human Rights Code in over 40 years to better ensure equality for all Ontarians in both the public and private sectors. In making needed changes to the Human Rights Code, our government has provided quicker and more direct access for victims of discrimination, provided legal supports to help those who would otherwise have difficulty accessing justice, and focused resources to address systemic human rights issues. By strengthening the system to provide faster, more accessible justice for those who have faced discrimination, we have improved the protection of equality rights that Ontarians cherish.

Canada has played an important role in the advancement of human rights around the world. The charter has come to be seen as a model and Canada an international leader in that regard. Thanks to our charter, no matter who you are, no matter where you come from, no matter how long you've been here and no matter what your roots are, your rights and freedoms will be protected and respected here in ways that may not be so elsewhere in the world.

As we recognize the 30th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it is my privilege, Speaker, to reaffirm this government's commitment to upholding the rights and freedoms of all Canadians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?**

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Speaker, this year is a year of anniversaries. It is the bicentennial of the War of 1812. It is the Diamond Jubilee year for Her Majesty the Queen, Queen Elizabeth, the 60th anniversary of her ascension to the throne. It is the 100th anniversary of the Grey Cup. And it's the 45th anniversary of the last time the Toronto Maple Leafs won the Stanley Cup.

On behalf of the PC caucus, I am honoured to have the opportunity to say a few words in recognition of the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. On April 17, 1982—30 years ago today—at a ceremony in Ottawa on Parliament Hill, Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau officially signed the Canada Act, 1982, into law. This act patriated the constitution, bringing it home to Canada, and it established the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Regardless of our political affiliation in this House, I think all members would acknowledge the importance of this moment as one of the seminal events in Canada's history. It was a symbolic moment, a moment when Canada, once a French possession dismissed by Voltaire as "quelques arpents de neige," nothing more than a few acres of snow, and then a colony of the British Empire which came of age on the battlefields of Vimy Ridge—



but with the repatriation of the Constitution, Canada took its place in the community of nations as a truly independent state.

For much of our history, the Canadian Constitution could only be amended by an act of the British Parliament in Westminster. When Sir John A. Macdonald and the Fathers of Confederation authored the British North America Act in 1867, establishing the Dominion of Canada and moulding a collection of disparate colonies into a country, the authority to amend the Canadian Constitution still resided with the British Parliament. This authority remained unchanged even after the Statute of Westminster granted Canada greater independence from Great Britain in 1931. While Canada was granted limited powers to amend its own Constitution in 1949, it was not until 1982 that Canada gained complete legislative independence from Great Britain.

Now, I don't think it will come as much of a surprise to anyone in the House here today that I say, as a Progressive Conservative, that I did not always agree with Pierre Trudeau. I was in high school when he was Prime Minister, with a growing sense of political awareness. I found him to be a remarkable Canadian but did not share many of his views.

However, looking at the Trudeau legacy, with the benefit of time that's passed, we must all acknowledge Trudeau as one of the foremost champions of Canadian federalism and a historically important Prime Minister who did much to shape Canada into the country that we know it is today. The patriation of the Constitution and the establishment of the charter are his defining accomplishments, a lasting legacy that he has left to all Canadians.

However, we must also not forget the leadership and important contributions of people such as Premier Bill Davis, Attorney General Roy McMurtry and Premier Peter Lougheed. Premier Davis was a strong supporter of the charter, and his leadership proved to be pivotal in getting other provinces on board. Without his work, it's quite possible that no agreement would have been reached.

When Canadians think of the Constitution, one of the first things that comes to their minds is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In many ways, the charter has come to define the Constitution. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms enshrined the rights that all Canadians hold dear into the Constitution. It guarantees basic rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of religion. It sets into law fundamental principles like the equality of all Canadians. The charter safeguards basic legal and democratic rights, like the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty and the right to vote. It upholds language rights and minority language education rights.

These rights and freedoms are guaranteed to all Canadians and stand at the core of what it means to be a free and democratic society. These are the rights that all Canadians cherish and help define who we are today as a society.

While these principles themselves were by no means new to Canadian society—Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, for example, set out many of them in the Canadian Bill of Rights in 1960—the charter officially enshrined them in the Constitution. By enshrining these basic rights into the Constitution, Canada has become a leader around the world in our commitment to freedom and democracy. Our charter has become a model that new democracies around the world look to as they transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic governance.

However, while the charter has become an important part of what it means to be a Canadian, as Lawrence Martin notes in today's *Globe and Mail*, we must also recognize that the establishment of the charter was not without its pitfalls. The process left deep and lasting scars on the Canadian political landscape. Mr. Martin writes, "With its exclusion of Quebec, the patriation exercise set in motion a fracturing of the country's unity that endured for more than a dozen years."

The patriation of the Constitution set in motion a decade-long constitutional battle and years of acrimonious negotiations. Ultimately, it led to the 1995 Quebec referendum, which nearly tore our country apart. Even today, Quebec is not a signatory of the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It has also been criticized by people such as former Saskatchewan Premier Roy Romanow in today's *Toronto Star* for its emphasis on individual rights, which may, at times, trump the broader public good—I'm almost finished, Mr. Speaker.

However, these pitfalls aside, the charter has left a lasting legacy upon Canadian society. It has helped to shape Canada into the free and democratic society that we all know and cherish. It upholds and safeguards some of the principles that are at the very heart of what it means to be Canadian. We have a duty as elected representatives to strive to uphold these principles and continue to build upon this legacy.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I take pleasure in rising in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the charter.

The charter establishes a number of negative rights, a number of rights which protect individuals from state interference. It's very important that we celebrate some of the achievements over these three decades. The charter instils in Canada the protection of certain fundamental freedoms that are the hallmarks of a free and democratic society. These freedoms include the freedom of expression, the freedom of religion and particular freedoms that protect the individual from state prosecution and violation of individual rights.

I take great pride in the fact that Canada is a leader in the protection of civil liberties and civil rights, and the charter is largely responsible for these protections. Some of these protections involve those who are accused of crimes. A society is often judged on the way they treat those who are most vulnerable, those who are worst off in society.

**1540**

It is again another sign of a truly free society, a truly democratic society, when we have rights which protect

those who are accused of crimes. In fact, I take great pride in the fact that we protect our citizens from unreasonable searches, from unreasonable seizures. This is a sign of a society which values freedoms, which will prevent a police state, an authoritarian state, something that we have seen happen in our society. Only two years ago we've seen what can happen in our very own country when we don't have the protection of our civil liberties, when we don't have the protection of our fundamental freedoms.

The right to dissent is a very essential component of a vigorous notion of a free society. The ability to say, "I disagree with the state's actions," is something we must uphold and protect, and it's something the charter protects. If you look at some of the violations that occurred two years ago in the G20 debacle, we see that that is the risk that we have when we don't protect our civil liberties, that those who attempted to peacefully protest, to raise their voices in dissent, were detained. Their civil rights were abrogated. They were kept in custody without any charges. That's why it's important to have a document which protects our freedoms.

And so while we celebrate some of the successes we've had—the protection of religious freedoms, from the protection of the articles of faith ranging from the Jewish community to the Sikh community to the Muslim community—and when we look at some of the protection in terms of avoiding police abuse which arises from section 7 of the charter, which protects us in terms of the security of person, the security of life, liberty, and ensures that if the police conduct activities which are excessive, which hurt or abuse their powers, that there is a sanction; there is a ramification. It's a way of telling the state that there is a limit to state authority, to state abuse of power.

But while the charter has been a very great tool in protecting our individual rights, there is one area in the charter in which it has fallen short, and it's important for us, while celebrating the achievements of the charter, to look to where we can improve. An area where the charter has fallen short is in the protection of positive rights, is in the protection of addressing the issues of inequalities in our society. Our society has seen an ever-increasing gap between those who have and those who have not. We've seen an increasing gap in the inequality between our citizens, those who reside in Canada.

It's very important to note that while the charter protects our fundamental freedoms, it does not protect our fundamental rights, rights that all citizens should have, all human beings should have: the right to housing, the right to food, the right to shelter, the right to live, the right to be able to move around in freedom. These positive rights—the right to an education, the right to health—these essential freedoms, which are positive freedoms, have not been protected by the charter, and this is an area we can move towards as our society improves.

As we move towards a more inclusive, more tolerant, greater society, we must ensure that our laws also reflect these positive rights, and that while we protect the right

to freedom of expression, the right to express ourselves in whatever religion we choose, we must also take into consideration the fundamental importance of the right to have shelter, the right to have food, the right to have an education, these positive rights which are the hallmarks of an even greater society, which we can all hope one day we will achieve.

## PETITIONS

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas everyone agrees that Ontarians should have access to healthy, clean drinking water from a secure source;

"Whereas, under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario regulation 319/08, public health inspectors are required to undertake risk assessments of small drinking water systems;

"Whereas many of these small drinking water systems are located in small businesses, Royal Canadian Legion halls, churches and other community facilities in rural Ontario with neither the budget to pay for the expensive testing required nor the volunteers to transport water samples to provincially accredited laboratories in urban centres hours away; and

"Whereas the history of test results at a small drinking water system location is only a small factor in the risk assessment, to the point where sites with a decade or more of clean test results may still be required to conduct monthly or weekly testing;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health amend Ontario regulation 319/08 to give the testing track record of a small drinking water system greater weight in the risk assessment process."

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Jenny.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

"Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas" since "October 2009, insured PET scans" are "performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with" Health Sciences North, "its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through" Health Sciences



North, "thereby serving and providing equitable access to the" people of the northeast.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Constantine to bring it to the Clerk.

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have a petition from residents of York South-Weston, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

"Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

"Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and hand it over to page William.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I have a petition here signed by thousands of people.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;...

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;...

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I'm proud to affix my name to this petition.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately."

I wholeheartedly agree, affix my signature and send it down with page Constantine.

### IMMIGRATION POLICY

#### POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities."

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

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"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I certainly support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to you via page Brady.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Madam Speaker, I apologize for missing the event last night. But anyway, I have a

petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows: Four 2.5 megawatt industrial wind turbines proposed by Leader Resources at Port Granby area.

"Whereas the residents who have signed this petition have concerns regarding the direct and indirect impact on the well-being of inhabitants and the local environment in the vicinity of industrial wind turbines; and

"Whereas there are concerns regarding setbacks, health issues, the impact on the local environment and property values; and

"Whereas the residents who have signed are certainly in favour of renewable energy but are not reassured by the current level of research on the subject;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to call for a moratorium on industrial wind turbines and for the project in" the area that is in the sensitive Port Granby crown land low-level radioactive waste site. These are two incompatible uses on the same property.

I sign this petition, support it and give it to William.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURE

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of residents from Woodslee in my riding of Essex. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board has begun a process to consider closing St. John the Evangelist school;

"Whereas St. John the Evangelist school is vital to the future well-being of the Woodslee hamlet and its students; and

"Whereas schools are not just buildings for learning; they are the heart of the community;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take whatever steps are necessary, including boundary adjustments, to keep open and maintain the long-term viability of St. John the Evangelist school."

I agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and present it to page Constantine.

#### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease is a degenerative brain disease that causes thinking and memory impairment. Alzheimer's disease is progressive, worsens over time, and will eventually lead to death;

"Whereas there are an estimated 181,000 Ontarians diagnosed with Alzheimer's and related dementia today, and that number is set to increase by 40% in the next 10 years;

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease creates social, emotional and economic burdens on the family and friends of those suffering with the disease;

"Whereas the total economic burden of dementia in Ontario is expected to increase by more than \$770 million per year through to 2020;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to establish an Alzheimer's advisory council to advise the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on matters pertaining to strategy respecting research, treatment and the prevention of Alzheimer's and other related dementia."

I sign my name and I present this to page Dia.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas a report from Ontario's Auditor General on the province's air ambulance service, Ornge, found a web of questionable financial deals where tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted and public safety compromised;

"Whereas Ornge officials created a 'mini-conglomerate' of private entities that enriched former senior officers and left taxpayers on the hook for \$300 million in debt;

"Whereas government funding for Ornge climbed 20% to \$700 million, while the number of patients airlifted actually declined;

"Whereas a subsidiary of Ornge bought the head office building in Mississauga for just over \$15 million and then leased it back to Ornge at"—at least—"a rate 40% higher than fair market rent;

"Whereas the Liberal Minister of Health completely failed in her duty to provide proper oversight of Ornge;

"Whereas this latest scandal follows the eHealth boondoggle where \$2 billion in health dollars have been wasted;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government of Ontario immediately appoint a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals surrounding Ornge."

I support this petition and am pleased to affix my signature.

#### TOURISM

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas tourism is a vital contributor to the economy of northwestern Ontario, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars into the province's economy from other provinces and the United States, unlike other regions in the province whose target demographic is people who already reside in Ontario;

"Whereas northwestern Ontario's tourist economy has been under attack by government policies such as the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, the harmonized sales



tax...the strong Canadian dollar and difficulties passing through the Canada/United States border; and

"Whereas studies have shown that tourism in the northwest nets significantly more money per stay than other regions of the province, in part due to visitors frequenting historical sites, parks and roadside attractions that they learn about through travel information centres;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To keep the travel information centres in Fort Frances, Kenora and Rainy River open permanently to ensure that northwestern Ontario maximizes the benefit of our tourist economy."

I fully support this petition and I will give it to Manak.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm pleased to introduce this petition, and I want to thank the mayor of Fort Erie, Doug Martin, for presenting this petition to me the day of the rally in front of Queen's Park. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I'm pleased to sign my name to this petition.

### USE OF CONSERVATION RESERVES

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the proposed preliminary management statement and proposed additions for Clear Lake Conservation Reserve and Dawson Ponds and Plastic Lake Conservation Reserve, dated 9 February 2012, has been issued without consultation, is based on factual inaccur-

acies and would ban the existing use of this area by cross-country skiers, snowshoers, anglers and residents;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Recall the proposed management statement to correct the factual inaccuracies;

"(2) Eliminate the 45-day consultation period to allow full and fair discussion with community groups; and

"(3) Require ministry staff to engage in an open discussion with local groups to negotiate fair terms of responsible community use, including the use of groomers to allow the historical trails to continue to be accessible to community users."

Signed by many, many people from Haliburton county, and I affix my signature.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENT INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION DES LOYERS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 16, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / *Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.*

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Speaker, we're here to provide some comments on Bill 19. I want to thank the member for his previous comments.

I think it's important for us to look at some comments that were made at the time that the original act that Bill 19 hopes to amend was put forward. I want to quote, just because he's opposite me, the member for Scarborough Centre, who was then the parliamentary assistant to the minister. Here's what he said of the process that took place at that time:

"It took some time and it took an engagement of unprecedented proportions with stakeholders. In fact, I don't think this province has ever gone through such a substantial consultation process. We've travelled the province. We've been in 10 different communities, 10 different cities, hearing from landlords and tenants in Toronto, Kitchener, London, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Kingston and Hamilton.

"We've had over 5,000 completed questionnaires sent in to us, over 1,200 telephone inquiries, 250 written sub-

missions and 30 different meetings with various other regional stakeholder groups. Over 1,500 people participated in those meetings.”

Had I been in this place, I probably would have congratulated the government on doing such a wide consultation, but certainly, I think, when you look at this piece of legislation, the government could be a bit embarrassed, because there was no consultation with this. In fact, if you look at some of the more substantive issues that we have on the housing front today—if we did have those consultations, if we did just take a snapshot of the numbers that the parliamentary assistant then, now the minister, who sits across—if we had done that type of consultation, we wouldn't be here debating Bill 19. We would have a far more substantive bill that deals with the real housing issues that are in this province—the fact that we have such a shortage of rental housing accommodation.

Those are the issues that I think we should be talking about rather than this small, narrow-minded, unnecessary bill before us, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Just to make some comments on the presentation by the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry—it's a wonderful region of our province. Madam Speaker, just to make some comments on this particular bill: Number one, I think we have to compliment the minister for bringing forth this bill at this very particular time. There is no better time to look after our needy people, especially the tenants: at a time when our economy is so much in doubt. What better thing can we do for our tenants to give them peace of mind instead of worrying about what their rent is going to be next month or next year?

Given the economic situation, I think it's the most propitious time to let our tenants know that for the next four years they can have peace of mind and concentrate more on working, growing their family, planning a holiday, planning recreation events with their families, instead of worrying about the next bill.

I have to say, Madam Speaker, that this has received already quite a bit of consultation, but I would like to see this bill move ahead and see what else can be done, can be said, can be brought forth to improve it.

I have to say, when we deal with housing in general, that when that particular government came into power, I was on that side and Minister Al Leach was sitting on this side here. The day after they took power, they cancelled every housing project, period—completely. They did not build one rental unit, one affordable unit.

I think we are very proud of the record of this government with respect to housing and affordable housing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Durham?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I just have to respond to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry on Bill 19, but I can't for a moment sit and ignore what the

member from York West said, because I was here as well.

What we didn't do, we didn't subsidize the physical property. What we did is, we gave a housing allowance, which was more flexible and available much more broadly than waiting for projects—capital—to be built. We got on with the job immediately and gave a shelter allowance, we called it.

In fairness, I think the point must be made that our members have been standing somewhat in protest. This Bill 19 substantially does nothing except set a minimum and a maximum for rent guidelines.

Our protestations have all been about the failure of this government to listen to the opposition and to have a select committee on Ornge—the wasteful, scandalous spending of almost \$1 billion on Ornge medical evacuation helicopters. Let's be very clear: That's what we're debating here. This bill has nothing in it. Bill 19 could basically be passed in a moment's notice. But what is important is, we support the idea of having a democratic process in here where the government actually listens and they stand up and explain to the people of Ontario the wasteful spending not just in eHealth but the Ornge helicopter fiasco.

Frank Klees has been asking questions on that every day of the Minister of Health. In my view, she should resign today out of respect for this process. That's what this discussion is about, in my opinion.

Bill 19: There's really nothing in it. Let's be honest here. There's the bill. For the people watching, there's the bill. It's about four lines. That's the bill that we're spending all this time on. Why are they wasting time on this bill when there was a bill on resolving co-op housing disputes yesterday, which is Bill 65—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I thank the members who stood to comment on my discussion on Bill 19. There were some good points raised. I think it comes back to a bill that really doesn't do anything. It's trying to make—I guess it's a good-looking bill for show, a “feather bill,” as colleagues to my left called it.

Really, we're looking at trying to get at costs. We see now that the rent increases have well been within what this bill is looking at for the last 10 years, so I'm not sure why it's put out there, especially when we have some major increases going on. We've heard people talking about the increases to hydro: 85% for people with a normal meter. Anybody who's lucky enough to get a new smart meter—150% increases. This government would never run on a platform if they were to do that. As the Auditor General was so clear to say, it's up to this government to let people know what this Green Energy Act is costing this province. Unfortunately, I guess, it will likely end up bankrupting this province.

We're looking at a budget here that spends an extra \$2 billion over last year. We have the gall not only to ask



our children and our grandchildren to pay for this debt in the future, but then we're going to turn around and ask them to pay our pensions because the pension plans aren't funded either. There has got to be a plan with this government, and we just don't see it.

I think the people are starting to come around. I think the next time there's an election, they'll put somebody in who will address some of the issues, because down the road, when we've lost our pensions and we can't afford to live in places because of the cost, we have to take action. Being prudent today and the savings we put in today will be there for us tomorrow. I think we need a responsible government to look at that, that will stand up and, really, that's standing up for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

We have heard from many of our colleagues over and over the past few days, months, about the issue with this bill; namely, that it does little, if anything, to actually make rent more affordable for everyday Ontarians. We have heard the disturbing statistics about the massive number of people in many cities across this province who are on wait-lists for affordable housing, who live in shelters and who are experiencing extreme poverty as a result of high rent costs. Capping the allowable annual rent increase which is charged by landlords to 2.5% doesn't address the reality that rent is just too darned high these days.

I was speaking with a young woman yesterday. She's in her 30s, and let's call her Claire. She's very well educated and has a really good job. She is also a single mother of a young son who is in daycare. But when I asked her about her housing situation and the cost of rent, it was evident that sky-high rent costs are not just a serious everyday problem and concern for low-income people and those around and below the poverty line; even those with full-time jobs are having great difficulties paying their rent and keeping afloat.

1610

Previously, this woman lived in shared housing, which gave her cheap rent. However, once her child was born, she needed to find a different place. She has a two-bedroom home, modest. It's an apartment, which she paid \$1,300 a month for, four years—or actually, this was four years ago. However, this rent has been subject to rent increases annually, making it much higher now. But this is cheap in the city, so she tells me.

With no job security, she was unemployed after her maternity leave, leaving her in a desperate situation, facing homelessness with a small baby. Thankfully, after months and months of looking for work and using cash advances on her Visa to pay for rent, to pay for food, she was lucky enough that she found a job—just in time to have her landlord tell her that his daughter was going to move into the apartment that she held, and she now had to move out. She looked at dozens of apartments.

However, rent had risen hundreds of dollars over the past few years. Everything was so much more expensive for her, and a challenge to find something, just a little something, for her to call her home.

Her landlord told her she could stay if she agreed to pay the hydro bills, which had been previously included in her rent. She agreed, knowing full well that what she was agreeing to and what he was proposing was technically not allowed under the landlord and tenant act. But she knew full well that even with paying the extra for the hydro bill, the rent would still be cheaper than many of the other options that she looked at. She was not in a position to challenge him, even though what was going on, she knew full well, was illegal.

Even though this young woman makes over \$50,000 a year after taxes, she pays over 50% of her income on rent, she pays another 25% on daycare costs—she is one of the few fortunate ones to have subsidized daycare in this city—leaving 25% of her income for massive student loan repayments, bills, food and other household essentials. Often, she must rent her other bedroom and sleep with her son just because she can't afford to live on her single salary.

This is an endless stress which plagues so many people in this province of ours: the length people must go to to keep up and to keep a roof over their heads; the money borrowed from credit cards just to be paid back with tons of interest. Every day, thousands of Ontarians are facing the reality that they are just a small step away from homelessness, from despair. So when reading this bill, it is not hard to see that a savings of a few dollars a month does nothing to help this working mother or others like her pay their rent and stay afloat each month. We know that she is one in five Ontarians who pay more than half her income on rent.

The NDP would work to phase in a new housing benefit of \$100 a month for individuals and \$125 a month for families who pay more than 30% of their income on rent. Now that is something that would help.

We're here in this Legislature because we're elected by our constituents to listen to their concerns and commit to working on their behalf to making their life a little bit better and affordable for them. It really just takes a few moments to ask people about their housing situation, and you will hear the same story over and over again, time and time again.

It doesn't matter where you live in this province. The need for affordable housing is an alarming, widespread crisis. I think that we can do better and we must. When I hear the staggering numbers of people in urban areas who are desperately in need of more affordable housing, I too remember the many First Nations communities I visited just a short time ago.

This country was made aware of dire housing conditions facing the community of Attawapiskat last fall. I was in that community. I looked in the faces. I saw the eyes. I noticed the despair. I saw the frustration. I felt it. But on my tour through many other First Nations communities, it was evident that this was not just a crisis

unique to Attawapiskat. There are countless other First Nations communities living in similar troubling conditions.

In my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, there are hundreds of families on the wait-lists for affordable housing and there is not even an estimated time for when housing will be made available. An organization in my riding has submitted an application to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for capital funding over their national allocation for a much-needed project. They, along with many other organizations, realize the urgent need for housing in many of these rural communities.

Seniors on fixed incomes and persons with disabilities are often on the losing end of this housing crisis. This organization is looking to get funding to transform a recently closed long-term-care facility into a supportive rental housing project. This would create 30 apartments for seniors, singles and persons with disabilities. This seemed like a logical thing to do: The space is there; the need is there. These are the sorts of projects we need to support and move forward in order to create housing spaces that are so greatly needed in our province. We need this government to commit to building housing that meets the needs of the people of this province.

In September 2010, my colleague Cheri DiNovo introduced a private member's bill to strengthen tenant protections. Its provisions included strengthening rent control, implementing landlord licensing, protecting tenants from excessive utility charge increases, extending protections to more tenants, implementing a standard lease agreement and improving access to justice for tenants.

These are small measures that we must make in order to crack down on slum landlords who are seriously taking advantage of often the most marginalized people in our province. We need to address the gap between low-income households and market rent so that people, like the single mother I mentioned earlier, people like the seniors and persons with disabilities and other low-income folks are not burdened each and every day with whether on the first of the month they will have a roof over their heads or not.

Speaker, I believe this bill fails to address the real concerns of this province: the need to make life more affordable for all Ontarians. Again, Speaker, I will say we can do better and we must.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on Bill 19 and the comments from the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

I did just want to comment on some comments that one of my colleagues made earlier, because he was talking about what happened when the Harris government cancelled all the affordable housing projects that were being developed. It's interesting that the very last affordable housing units that came out of the NDP government were built in Guelph; that in fact the Conservatives attempted to cancel—actually went to court to try

and cancel—affordable housing units, and lost that battle because the contract had already been signed. Guelph got the last of the NDP's affordable housing units, so that little bit of history.

**1620**

But if we look at what's happened more recently, or even going back, because in the 1980s and in the 1990s you would often see increases of 6%, 8% a year in rent, and hence we ended up with the rent control legislation that we have—

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The highest average rate was under the NDP.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My colleague here helpfully says that the highest average increases in rent were actually under the NDP. Then, when you look more recently at what we have done with the legislation, what we see is that, on average, over the term of our government, the increase has been 1.9%. But this year under the guideline, it's actually been 0.7%. So you actually see it falling dangerously low for landlords.

To put it simply, what Bill 19 does is it establishes a corridor. Rent increases will not be less than 1% and will not be more than 2.5%.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Leeds-Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to congratulate the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for his very kind words in terms of his constituents. I appreciate the fact that you consistently in this place stand up for your constituents.

You also made some very good points about the failure of this government's affordable housing strategy. Last September, two groups in this province, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, Ontario region, produced a report in their edition called *Where's Home*. It found, basically, that this government's affordable housing and poverty reduction strategy just isn't working. It showed clearly that the gap between homeowners' and tenants' incomes is growing wider, that waiting lists for assisted housing are getting longer and have swelled to over 152,000 since 2010, and that vacancy rates, particularly in urban areas, are getting even more tightened.

The fact that he brought up Bill 4, which would have taken the HST off home heating, which obviously the Progressive Conservatives supported with the New Democrats, I think would have gone a long way to help the burden of tenants. In fact, the study that I quoted earlier showed that energy costs have gone up 45% since 2002, and between February 2010 and February 2011 alone, the increase was a staggering 12.2%. Not surprisingly, our food bank usage from tenants has been increased. If you look at some of the studies, they show that at food banks, 64% are tenants in market housing and 27% in social housing. It's not surprising, when you look at studies from the Ontario Association of Food Banks, that people who use their services consume about 65% of their income just on rent.

So I applaud him for his comments. This government has not gone to the root cause of the problem with Bill 19, and I thank him for his comments today.



**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Hamilton Mountain.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm also happy to lend my voice to this debate today in regards to Bill 19. I also think that it unfortunately doesn't go far enough.

We have, as you've heard, single moms who are making \$50,000-plus a year who still can't make ends meet. When we continue to put increases on top of increases, yet we want to put freezes on people's wages and freezes on social assistance, we can't speak out of both sides of our mouths and expect people in this province to make it work.

In Hamilton, just the average bachelor—which isn't much to look at, you know, without the licensed landlords on the side of that, but I'll get to that—\$510 a month. They're making \$599 a month, and our food banks are actually starving out now also.

So we really have to look at the root of this issue. We have to make sure that we're getting to the heart of the core, to make sure that we do have single moms who are making a decent wage of \$50,000-plus a year—think about a person on social assistance who's barely making \$15,000 a month, and we're expecting them to make it work. In the city of Toronto, I couldn't imagine having to pay the rent here. In Hamilton, it's high, so paying it in Toronto—and I'm not sure of the rest of the province; I know it varies from place to place. It's just simply unaffordable. Making sure that maybe putting a cap on it for some time until we get our incomes up to the level might be something else to look at.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd just like to compliment the member from Algoma-Manitoulin. I have to tell the member that the tenants in my area are no different than any other tenants, and I can sympathize with him. I know he speaks very convincingly about the needs not only of his people but the need for more affordable housing.

On top of what we are debating today with respect to Bill 19, I have to remind the House that we have tried to strike a deal with the federal government for funding because we recognize the need for more affordable housing. As of late, we only get something like \$480 million, which is certainly not enough. Out of those funds, we also created, if my memory serves me well, some 300 homes for the native people up north as well. That created some 5,000 jobs, but that is not enough to face the shortage that we have in affordable housing.

In the last few years we have built considerable housing, but compared to the needs, we need a lot more. We managed to sign the largest housing contract or program with the federal government. We have initiated, for the first time, the long-term affordable housing strategy. This bill is part of that particular strategy.

Quite a bit has been done, but I think this bill goes a long way. I hope that it will travel. The opposition and the public out there are welcome: Make some submissions and bring some much better ideas to improve the bill. I'll look at the opposition for doing that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I'd like to thank the member from Guelph, the member from Leeds-Grenville, the member from Hamilton Mountain and the member from York West.

I just want to share a couple of words with the members that are in here. I will always speak on behalf of the people of Algoma-Manitoulin. That will always be the first words that are going to be coming out of my mouth from this seat that I hold here. Every single day that I will come here will be the words from them first. Then I will listen to what we have as a team here within our caucus to bringing that message forward on behalf of the rest of the Ontarians that are being affected by this.

I am not sure what doors everybody seems to be knocking on, but the message that I keep receiving, day in and day out, is a consistent one: "We need help. We need you to work as a Parliament. We need you to work here as members and listen to the needs that we have. We can't make ends meet at the end of the month. We can't. We're making decisions based on, 'Am I paying rent or am I paying my hydro bill? Do I have enough at the end of this month in order to buy my full prescription or will I be splitting it in half and trying to make ends meet with the sale that I can get on the corner?'" That is an embarrassment for this province, if our seniors and our people that are on our street are making these types of decisions.

I hear words in regard to "feather bills," and I really don't care for those words. We need to help Ontarians today. We need to do it now. We need to take that action. We have that opportunity. Let's make it right. Let's do the right decisions. It's frustrating to hear, when we're talking about our food banks—and by all means, I hope every one of you participates at your local food bank once in a while, not as a photo opportunity but to really go out there and help them, because they need the help. They've been the backbone carrying the burden that is going on on the everyday streets in our communities.

1630

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** The member from Algoma-Manitoulin, your passion was phenomenal. Thank you so very much for what you said. It was nice to sit here and listen to the passion that comes out.

I rise today to speak on Bill 19, which seeks to amend the Residential Tenancies Act with regard to the rent increase guidelines. I'll start by saying that the debate on Bill 19 has been interesting because it has asked us to think about a very fundamental issue. It has asked us to consider what it means to have a home and the importance of that.

Housing is obviously a very basic human need, and "home" is a powerful word, a powerful idea. It's the foundation on which we build our lives, where we raise and nurture our families, cultivate loving relationships, host our friends and neighbours. It is a building block of community. It is also where we go through all of the rich

and wonderful and sometimes heartbreaking drama that of course comes along with relationships and family. It's where we experience the fleeting and fragile nature of the world as we watch our families age, and ourselves as well.

A lot of change goes on in any life and in any home at the best of times, and it's not always the best of times. Certainly, for 600,000 households living in overcrowded, substandard, unaffordable housing or the 600,000 Ontarians looking for work right now, it's nowhere near the best of times.

In introducing Bill 19, the minister mentioned National Housing Day, which she said was an important reminder of the importance of affordable housing. She said, "We know that access to affordable housing is crucial to breaking the cycle of poverty, that access to affordable housing means that students will do better at school and that people will be healthier."

So, yes, it is important that we acknowledge the need for a range and mix of housing with varying affordable levels so that Ontarians can weather the turbulence of this life with grace, dignity and a bit of comfort. That mix also allows our towns and cities to accommodate a variety of households we want in the fabric of our neighbourhoods. We know that such a mix makes for a healthy, diverse community. But a recent report by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities found that over the last decade we have fallen short of the ideal. More and more Ontario tenants are spending more than 30% of their income on rent; one in five pays more than half their income on rent. That makes it very hard for them to budget money for food, clothing, medicine and other basic necessities. It causes unnecessary stress.

In my home riding of Burlington, food bank use has gone up by 25% since 2006. The lack of affordable housing and low-rent units makes it too expensive for many low-income individuals to even live in Burlington, and it raises the risk of homelessness for those who do. Officials tell us that roughly 1,200 individuals in Halton become homeless every year, but the region has a relative lack of emergency and transitional housing options to serve the community in times of crisis such as these. The options we have are usually at capacity.

There's an extensive waiting list for assisted housing in Halton. Households usually wait for three years for housing, but the wait can be up to 10 years. To most of us, that's completely unimaginable. Province-wide, that waiting list has grown up to 152,000 and counting—that's about the size of the city of Burlington—when the Liberals took office in 2003.

In saying that, Speaker, since the McGuinty government has blocked all of our efforts to have a select committee for Ornge, I move adjournment of debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Ms. McKenna has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1635 to 1705.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 22; the nays are 38.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

The member for Burlington.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Speaker, the reason that I moved adjournment of the debate just now is because the people of Ontario have asked us to get to the bottom of what is going on in Ornge through the work of a select committee. Ornge is an organization that has tied itself up in knots in order to evade official scrutiny and has cost Ontario taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars that we know of.

The Minister of Health has gone on record in this House on numerous occasions voicing her support for a select committee on Ornge if it was the will of the House—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask the member to maintain her—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order. I'd ask the member to keep her comments related to Bill 19.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I call for adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Ms. McKenna has called for adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1707 to 1737.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Ms. McKenna has moved adjournment of the House. All those in support, please rise and be counted.

All those opposed, please stand.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 57; the nays are 0.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** This House stands adjourned until 9 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1739.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
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Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craiton, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 18 April 2012

Mercredi 18 avril 2012

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 18 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 18 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 17, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate? The member from Huron—Bruce.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm pleased to rise this morning to participate in the debate on Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act. Sorry, we just didn't know if some other parties were participating, so we're back to this.

None of us in the House dispute the fact that bullying, in all its forms, has become a scourge in our schools, victimizing young people all over the province. I know that the newspapers have been certainly pronounced in the last several months in highlighting this fact with several cases that we've seen.

You know, in my day, I wish I could say—and I won't say the date—that when I was in school, this did not exist, but we all know that's untrue. We've always had bullying in our schools. I doubt that any of us went through our school years without either experiencing bullying first-hand or seeing it perpetrated on someone else, a friend or a relative. Although I hate to think about it, there may even be a couple of former bullies sitting here today.

Today, our schools are much more diversified in our society. That wasn't so obvious in the past decades. In recent decades, Canada—and Ontario in particular—has undergone a social and cultural metamorphosis. People from all over the world now make Ontario their home. They bring with them different customs, languages, clothing, religious practices, and appearances, which we now

take for granted. So this very diversity which makes our society so rich and vibrant can, unfortunately, spawn even greater opportunities for bullying and intolerance, often with tragic results, which we have unfortunately witnessed in this province. My colleagues, who spoke on this bill before, have aptly described instances of such tragedies, which are heartbreaking.

With the advent of technology, social media, bullying today has taken on a far more sophisticated and malicious demeanour. We have Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. They can be educational and social bonding experiences; they can be fun, informative and entertaining. However, when used for the wrong purposes, these technologies can also be hateful and virulent in attacking and ridiculing the vulnerable.

Young people are bullied because of their skin colour, their religion, their accent, the labels of the clothes and shoes that they wear, their ethnic background, their perceived social or economic class, their complexion, how fat or how thin they are and, of course, their sexual orientation. No one is disputing any of this; it is a reality that we all share.

As some of my colleagues have already said, there is no one in this House who has the knowledge, experience and expertise on this subject of my colleague from Kitchener—Waterloo, Elizabeth Witmer. She's a professional educator, a parent, a school board chair, an opposition education critic and a former Minister of Education. Ms. Witmer brings wisdom, compassion and practical experience to this debate. Her private member's bill, Bill 14, the Anti-Bullying Act, is a culmination of several years of research, analysis and passion.

It is a well-written, researched, documented piece of legislation which comprehensively addresses all forms of bullying. It drew on the personal and tragic experience of real victims of bullying, which she so eloquently detailed during her debate on the bill. It was influenced by the high statistics on bullying, such as the survey by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health which stated that about one third of all students have been bullied and another one third have been the bully. Ms. Witmer's bill also drew on a 2010 survey of grade 12 students by the Ontario Student Trustees' Association, which found that 46% had either been the victim or the perpetrator of bullying.

So while Bills 13 and 14 take quite different approaches to the problem of bullying, both were developed with the most honourable intentions, I believe, by their authors. However, this is where the bills diverge: Bill 14 is a far more comprehensive document in detailing all the conceivable reasons that a child may be bullied.



**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** It addresses the issue.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Yes. It analyzes the far-reaching social impact which bullying has on victims, their families, the perpetrators of the act, the school environment and the educational process itself. It puts a specific focus on cyberbullying, which of course is the most dominant and prevalent form of bullying in today's society. Bill 13 only touches on this phenomenon.

What Bill 13 does do is single out specific victims of bullying rather than addressing the far broader aspects of it. All victims of bullying are equal. They share a common pain, a lack of self-worth, a helpless anxiety of who they are and where they come from, and this is the problem. Our education critic, Ms. MacLeod, has done an excellent job in her analysis of the bill—her examples that she's brought from her riding have been actually nationally portrayed—and the changes that we'd like to see.

But this government believes that some victims of bullying are more worthy of special focus and attention and need to be specifically singled out in the legislation. Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of the great George Orwell classic *Animal Farm*, in which the animal kingdom is ruled by the pigs and other animals are there to serve them. In that social satire, the first item on the animal bill of rights is that all animals are created equal, except pigs, who are more equal. Bill 13 creates a super class of bullying victims, and that's not right. No victims of bullying are more worthy of support, compassion and understanding than other victims.

As my colleagues have already said, I'm appealing to the Minister of Education to draw on the comprehensive and well-researched bill which my colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo has put forward, and which passed second reading two or three weeks ago. The incorporation of Ms. Witmer's ideas into the official government bill would strengthen it immeasurably. As my colleague the member from Dufferin-Caledon yesterday said so eloquently, simply because an idea originates on this side of the House does not mean that it's unworthy of consideration and further discussion.

0910

This is not a game of good guys and bad guys. As members of the House, we are all elected by our constituents for whatever skills and talents we have to offer the people of our ridings. We all stood for office and come here every day to do our small part to try to make this province a better place for all our citizens. None of us comes here in the morning saying, "What can I do to make Ontario a worse place and make life more miserable for our citizens?" To take this type of approach is silly, childish and, I believe, political. It is partisan politics at its worst.

As many of us have said, Bill 13 would be vastly improved by incorporating much of what Ms. Witmer has put into Bill 14. As Bill 13 currently stands, it is too narrow and one-dimensional. It does not recognize the complexity of bullying in terms of both the victims and the degree and variety of bullying to which these victims are subjected.

This is not the time for partisan politics. We have pleaded on that for weeks and months—I see the education minister shaking her head, but really the stakes are too high. Stop it.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'm surprised you'd do this.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Really? Too many innocent young victims and potential victims are counting on us to do the right thing and make their environment safer and more respectful. Again, I implore the Minister of Education to put aside the partisanship which we have seen in the preparation, introduction and debate associated with Bill 13. As I said earlier, there is no one in this House who has the knowledge, expertise, wisdom and passion for this subject as do my colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo and my colleague from Nepean-Carleton. The government needs to put aside its fear of ideas which don't originate on the government side of the House and embrace good ideas from proposals, regardless of where they come from.

So we cannot support Bill 13 as it is currently crafted. However, a modification of this legislation to reflect the main components of Bill 14, the Anti-Bullying Act, would undoubtedly produce a bill that's worthy of support. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this, this morning. I trust that the minister and the government—I've genuinely got up and said my piece—will do the right thing and amend this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Mr. Speaker, I support much of what the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock has said, and I'm concerned about both political parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives. We're dealing with an issue of bullying here, and it's clear to me that there is bullying on both sides, and this has got to stop.

The New Democrats could have introduced Bill 15, and we didn't because we thought that would be yet another element of division within the political parties, and we thought, given the topic, that that wasn't a fair thing to do.

I think the Minister of Education has really—I mean, she says she's making efforts to reach out, although in her work with the school boards, I notice that she has been quite a tough person—dare I say that she has bullied some.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I have it from good sources. What I really want to say to both parties is, just reach out a little bit on either side and end the schoolyard stuff, because this is what we're talking about. I think if you did that, we can solve this.

I support Bill 13. We do. We supported Bill 14, and there are elements in both bills that are reasonable. So I reach out to both political parties—you are both equally unfair around this issue—and I say to you both, stop it. We're dealing with bullying, and I think one of you has to stop it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** I'm pleased to rise again to speak to Bill 13 as we continue this discussion with regard to accepting schools and making children feel safe and helping our schools accept all our children. As a mother, again this is an area that I speak to my children about. I hear the stories, and we can all remember when we were younger, as was pointed out earlier. This isn't a new phenomenon but one that has certainly come to the fore in terms of the changes that are occurring in our schools.

We've had many hours of debate on this bill. Quite evidently, we all agree: Something needs to be done. But we are spending so much time here talking about which is the better bill, who has the better definition and who has the better information, where what we should be doing is proceeding with this, bringing this to committee and making changes if we need to make them so that we can actually go forward and protect our children. We are spending too much time discussing which is better, Bill 13 or Bill 14; again, another point where the opposition seems to think they have all the answers, they have the right definitions, they have the right bill, whereas we have the wrong bill.

So I would agree with the statement that was just made: We need to work together on this; we need to bring this forward. Bring this to committee so that we can continue to do what we need to do, and that is to protect our children, support our schools, and support our families and our community.

Our legislation provides clear expectations. I know that the opposition seems to think it doesn't. It increases accountability. It's a complete bill. I can't agree with the statement that this government has been selfish or that we're not doing what we need to do for our community. This is a world-class bill, and this government has invested heavily in our schools and our education system to work with our children and with our school boards.

So let's remember, it's all about the children. That's what we're here for. And as we continue to spend time here debating this or debating what should or shouldn't be said in the bill, we're wasting time. We need to bring this forward. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I appreciate the opportunity to congratulate my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock on her opportunity to speak to the anti-bullying legislation.

I'm a bit disturbed at what I heard from the New Democrats and from the Liberals today that they effectively think we shouldn't continue to debate important issues of the day in the chamber and do our due diligence. That's the right of the opposition; it's also the right of every single member here to actually talk about the important issues of the day, and this piece of legislation, of course, is one that's important to my colleagues in the Progressive Conservative Party. I know it's import-

ant to members of the other parties as well, but we shouldn't be bullied for our points of view. I mean, that's where they need to be careful, because at the end of the day, this impacts kids' lives.

Parents have contacted us. As education critic for the Ontario Progressive Conservatives, I can assure you that I speak about this on a daily basis with concerned parents throughout Ontario and from my home community of Ottawa. We know, for example, that we can be doing better, but doing better doesn't necessarily mean doing it faster. We must do our due diligence. We must allow members of this assembly to have their say. After all, Speaker, that is why they were elected to this place in the first place. They were elected to bring their views from their constituents.

I think we all agree that the stories we have been hearing and that have been told in this Legislature on this anti-bullying law have been very important and have helped shape our views, and we find that there are actually elements of commonality among all of us in this chamber, because at the end of the day, we all care about Ontario's children. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I just wanted to weigh in on this debate. First of all, I think the term "bullying" has been taken way out of context that somehow what goes on in this House between the opposition parties and the government on this particular bill can be referred to as bullying. You know, bullying takes place in our schools, in our schoolyards, on our streets, when kids feel so intimidated that it changes their lives forever. To relate what's happening in this House on this particular bill, or any other bill, to parties somehow bullying one another is really taking that totally out of context.

These two bills both have good aspects to them. We have a government bill before the House that we would urge all parties in the House to get along with, so that we can actually do something of a very definitive nature with respect to the bullying that goes on and has been going on in our schools for years. I can remember instances when I was a child many, many years ago—my kids say it's so long ago it was probably in the Stone Age, you know—when kids were bullied, and they carried that stigma, that feeling that goes along with it for many, many years to come.

These are good attempts to stop the kind of activities that have been going on in our schools, at times—not by most students, but by some students—for too long. It's important that we get a hold of this by giving the school authorities the right kind of mechanisms—and that's the way I look at this—to stop these kinds of behaviours and to also be of help to those individuals, those kids, that are involved in the bullying that takes place in our schools.

**0920**

Let's not somehow pretend that the kind of discussion that takes place here, let's not relate that and say that that's bullying of any nature whatsoever. This is the typical kind of political debate that takes place. We're all



adults here. We know how to take care of that. Let's deal with the real issue, and that's with the bullying that takes place in our schools on a day-to-day basis.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock has a two-minute reply.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I thank the member from Trinity-Spadina with his comments on the bill, but also him saying to stop it and let's all work together on the bill. He's right, and that's what I'm saying. We are here to debate the bill and to try to make amendments. We have the right to bring forward amendments and make changes, and we've articulated this. We had the opportunity for Ms. Witmer to have her private member's bill brought up and discussed, and her points made and the changes she'd like to see.

The member from Windsor West: We're not blocking it from going to committee. That is the next stage. We are still in the debate here. We're doing our times; we're on our 10-minute cycles. Yes, we do need to work together, and I said that in my comments. I was very, very serious that this is a huge issue that we need to get right. Yes, we have felt some partisan pushback from you, and I'm not going to hide that. I say we shouldn't be doing that on this bill. It's a very important issue.

The member from Nepean-Carleton is correct with her passion, her articulation of what she'd like to see, her real-life examples that she's spoken so passionately about here. When you see members of the opposition kind of heckling when that happens, it's absolutely ridiculous and uncalled for in this bill. I know that partisan politics is part of our culture here, but this bill is very serious. When we see that being abused and used for political purposes, of course we get upset, and we have a right to do that.

The member from Kingston and the Islands: Sure, bullying that happens to children at a young age does shape their lives, and you see lots of newspaper articles that say if that occurs, the less chance of getting a better education, the less self-confidence they have, the less productive they are in society. This is a serious issue. We all need to deal with it. We are here to work co-operatively. We are giving our feedback, and this government should listen.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to stand today to participate in the debate for Bill 13. Yesterday, we had some colleagues in the PC caucus who were very, very eloquent and stated so many examples of bullying and why it's so important to address this whole issue in a very comprehensive manner.

Yesterday, I literally had tears in my eyes as my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings was sharing real-life experience of bullying from his riding. It just breaks my heart. I was inspired by my colleague from Dufferin-Caledon when she so sincerely stood up and spoke for the need to collaborate between Bills 13 and 14.

This is not the time to be partisan. This issue is so important to every individual in Ontario. We need to set

aside party colours and do what's right for both the victims and the bullies themselves.

It's interesting, because I found it very unfortunate yesterday—I'm a rookie in this House, and I'm very, very inspired through the history and motivated to represent my riding to the best of my ability, but I have to admit I was taken aback a little bit and disappointed when yesterday I heard the Premier himself say to the leader of the loyal opposition that Tim Hudak, the leader of the PC Party, was not allowed to ask questions, and it's like, "Oh, my goodness. What on earth is this?"

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Check the Hansard. He said, "You are not allowed to ask questions."

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order, the member from Nepean-Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** This is a sensitive issue. I don't understand why the government, if they don't like what they have to hear, then leave—this is a serious issue—and not heckle her.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Continue.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that no one is above any other in this House. We all have an opinion and we should have the right to express it, and no one should be told whether they can or cannot ask a question. You know, I haven't decided yet whether yesterday was an example of bullying in and of itself, or just simple arrogance.

But here's the deal: When I worked for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, one of my favourite responsibilities was staffing provincial 4-H leadership camp and regional camps, and also other experiences around leadership development with regard to the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario and the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. In those leadership opportunities, I just took great pleasure. There were individuals from all points of Ontario—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the member from Huron-Bruce to stick to the bill. You're wandering a bit. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, but I do have a point, and I beg some lenience here.

The fact of the matter is, a topic that we studied and that those young people, and young at heart, identified as a priority was the fact that diversity mattered, situational leadership mattered, problem-solving mattered. And these young people, ranging in age from 12 to 21 to 32 and, as I said, to the young at heart, came to understand that every individual mattered. That experience that we had in those leadership environments was like turning on a light bulb that had a dimmer switch. Essentially, those lights got brighter and brighter and brighter. It is absolutely not acceptable to let any individual who for whatever reason chooses to bully dim those lights.

The fact of the matter is that every child, every person, deserves an uninhibited opportunity, like they did in 4-H camp, to discover their potential and discover who they are meant to be without any bullying, without any stress. Because let's face it, life can have a lot of pressures in and of itself, and we do not need any extracurricular or extraneous events that maybe make individuals question themselves or their self-worth.

No one can argue that support systems and prevention of bullying in our schools should be overlooked. The support systems in our schools and the prevention of bullying should be paramount. Legislation to protect our children should be all-encompassing and made to protect every child from any instance of bullying, and that's why I'm very pleased to support my colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo in her bill, Bill 14. Bill 13 just doesn't go far enough. I find that Bill 14 is a comprehensive anti-bullying bill that focuses on prevention, accountability and awareness.

Awareness is so important. We have to get to the root cause: Why are people choosing to bully? Bill 14 provides students, parents, educators and the community at large with a strategy to raise awareness and prevent bullying, as well as a process to resolve it. That is so important. We need to collect data and report back to the ministry so that we can build, as I said, a comprehensive bill like our esteemed member from Kitchener–Waterloo's. She has spent so much time making sure all the i's are dotted, all the t's are crossed and that her approach is relevant in terms of identifying, addressing and, most importantly, resolving the whole act of bullying.

We have to get to the root causes, because bullying happens for what seems to be a reason of validation. Individuals need to feel good about themselves for one reason or another, and they stand up and they talk over top of people. They physically bully or push people around, or they even resort to our social media and cyberspace to validate themselves by propelling themselves over top of another individual, and this just isn't acceptable.

We have to find a way to compromise. Speaker, we have to find a way to massage both Bills 13 and 14 together, because this is an issue that should not have any partisan stripes in terms of colours. This is an important issue whereby we need to take off our party hats and do what's right for the children and all victims of bullying.

0930

Again, that comes down to collecting data, reporting to the ministry and having a comprehensive anti-bullying bill that focuses on prevention, accountability and awareness. We believe in tackling bullying head-on and, unlike the Liberal bill, the PC bill does so with four critical areas: (1) reporting and investigating bullying; (2) the accountability of school officials and boards to the ministry; (3) education and public awareness to prevent bullying; and (4) remedial education for bullies to teach them that bullying is unacceptable.

Bill 14 requires anti-bullying lessons to be incorporated in the provincial curriculum from JK to grade 12,

and I would suggest to you that that's exactly what we've done in terms of our leadership experiences in rural Ontario—again, the Junior Farmers' Association of Ontario, 4-H, the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. We learn about diversity. We learn about coping and dealing in difficult situations. We learn about situational leadership. We learn that no matter what community you come from, what religion you represent and what ideals you have, everybody matters. That is so, so important, and I feel very strongly that the member from Kitchener–Waterloo held that in her heart when she took so much time to get it right in Bill 14.

Again, Mr. Speaker, every individual in this province deserves an opportunity to discover their potential and to discover who they're meant to be in a totally uninhibited environment. Unfortunately, if we were to move solely forward with Bill 14, it wouldn't allow that environment. We need to explore the best of the best, take off our party colours, work together, collaborate and appreciate the essence that comes out of Bill 14 and, as I said before, massage Bill 13 and Bill 14 together. We have a chance to make a difference.

Last night we heard very eloquently from Speaker Levac that history could be made in this session, and I think we can do that again with the massaging of Bill 13 and Bill 14. Again, it's because every individual deserves the utmost opportunity to discover who they are and make the best of their lives and feel proud about who they are. In actual fact, even the bullies themselves need a little bit of attention. They need to understand why they're choosing very obtrusive actions to validate themselves so that they too, the bullies themselves, can address their potential and discover who they're meant to be as well. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm happy once again to rise to this very important debate regarding bullying. We've definitely faced quite a bit of it in Hamilton. My niece is still in high school and I speak to her on a regular basis and question her about what's going on in the school, and over and over and over again I hear how bad it is in her high school.

The biggest issue with these bills that I see—and that's from listening first-hand right from the children's mouths—is that there's nobody there to enforce it. So if we're not providing funding for the schools to be able to bring in people to watch over them, to be there, and make sure that there's adults in place to monitor these situations and that there's therapists on-site to deal with these situations, we're just going to continue to beat ourselves in the head here. Because no matter how many rules we make, if we don't give them the tools to do it, they're not going to be able to do it.

So between both good bills, Bills 13 and 14, if we're not providing them the tools to be able to implement it, we're not going to get any further. So hopefully when this goes to committee, these will be the changes that are put into place. We need funding to go with this bill. We



need to make sure we have adults on duty who are specifically going to pay attention to this kind of stuff, and that's the only way it's going to work, because regardless of what they're being bullied for, they're being bullied and it needs to be addressed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to be able to stand to have an opportunity to speak in support of Bill 13. I want to share with the Legislature what I learned and heard last week in a constituency week with my residents and students in Scarborough-Agincourt.

I heard very clearly from my constituents that they do support Bill 13, particularly the fact that this is about inclusion, this is about acceptance. Okay? This is nothing about sex education. This is not about changing the curriculum. This is about making our schools safe. That's the first thing I heard very clearly.

I also had an opportunity last Tuesday to visit one of my high schools, Dr. Norman Bethune high school, to speak and to consult the students about this particular bill and to talk and also to thank the students for their efforts in making their school an inclusive and accepting school. Let me share with you what the students are doing in this particular high school. They're making the entire school turn pink for the month of May as well as the month of April. So they're having activities every day in the school to celebrate pink. So this is a very diverse school, Mr. Speaker. Over 99% of the students in their school are Asian students. So for me, this is what the school is all about: making acceptance, inclusiveness.

But the other piece I took some time to ask the students with regard to Bill 13—I asked them, "Can you share with me, do you have any problem with regard to section 303.1(d), dealing with having 'activities or organizations that promote the awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name gay-straight alliance or another name'?"

They said to me, "What's wrong with having a club? What's wrong with having a club that has a different name than us?" They very, very clearly told me, "Do not back down, Soo. Do not—do not. Support every student in our school." This is what this bill is all about.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I have to agree with the member from Hamilton Mountain that we should collaborate on these two bills. We should put it together. We should work together on this.

However, from the first day in this House, I saw leaders of all three parties get up and say, "We have a minority government. We have to work together and we have to get the job done." And unfortunately, the members opposite didn't hear the same speech I did. We need to merge these two bills. There are too many people in my riding who do not like Bill 13 for obvious reasons, and I certainly couldn't support it.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** What are the obvious reasons?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Obvious reasons?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's not comprehensive enough.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Order.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** It's not comprehensive enough. It singles out too many people to be specialized. So that's why they don't like it.

However the member from Kitchener-Waterloo has submitted a very good bill, and we on this side of the House believe that you should look at it. However, like happened in the past, we never see any co-operation from your side of the House. And that includes on things such as the budget and whatever. We need to—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** So it is my opinion that since there's no co-operation on your side of the House for this bill, that the other two parties should put pressure on you to merge these two bills because of the good ideas in Ms. Witmer's bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

The member from Huron-Bruce has a two-minute reply.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Again, I have to draw everybody's attention back to what really matters here—and again, I'm a broken record—but I believe with all my heart it's about young people discovering their potential and being uninhibited and realizing the person they're meant to be without any sense of bullying whatsoever, no matter what walk of life they come from, what jurisdiction in the province they come from. Everybody matters. Just like rural Ontario matters, I might say.

But that said, I really appreciate the comments that were shared. Our member from Hamilton Mountain—absolutely. It's disappointing to hear that your niece is still reporting the fact that it is still really bad in her high school. I totally agree with you: The right people need to be in place, and we have to have the tools at hand to implement the proper approach.

**0940**

That reinforces the fact that the member from Kitchener-Waterloo was so much on track when her bill revolves around (1) the importance of reporting and investigating the issue of bullying; (2) the accountability of school officials and boards to the ministry; (3) the education and public awareness to prevent bullying; and (4) the remedial education for bullies to teach them that bullying is unacceptable, and that perhaps in that whole experience they can realize what they have that's special so that they too can discover the person they're meant to be instead of trying to tromp all over top of other folks.

I totally agree that this issue is properly addressed in Bill 14, and it needs to be massaged together with Bill 13.

To the member from Scarborough-Agincourt: I agree, schools definitely need to be made safe, but I respectfully say it's so much more than just acceptance or inclusion. It's about a comprehensive approach to managing the whole issue of bullying.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** It's my pleasure to stand here today and give my two cents' worth on this very serious issue of bullying.

We have two bills that have been brought forward, 13 and 14, and as noble as the members who crafted those bills are and the sincerity—I honestly do believe there's a sincerity to move on the issue of bullying, because bullying affects, of course, young people. As a former educator myself, Mr. Speaker, for the last 13 years, I can honestly say that I have witnessed and experienced bullying first-hand.

One of the things that disturbs me the most about individuals who bully others is the fact that it's obviously a self-esteem issue. There are issues behind the scenes that, as educators, we are not necessarily privy to: their life-style at home, what happens at home, among their peers etc. It's a human instinct to lash out, sometimes, especially for young people who don't know exactly how to focus their energies, and so they pick on younger individuals because of their differences, their variances. It has to be through the education of such seriousness that we extend that to those young individuals.

As noble as Bill 13 is—and Bill 14, I have to say—the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, Ms. Witmer, has done extensive research talking and listening to stakeholders about the issue of bullying and has actually listened to what the experts have to say. Bill 14, Mr. Speaker, I believe definitely outlines the parameters of how to address bullying within our education system, even within our society as a whole. It definitely brings forward a defined definition of what bullying on the Web is and what those penalties are for those individuals who partake in bullying in the social media.

So I think as nice as Bill 13 is and as nice as Bill 14 is, the member from Hamilton Mountain is right: We have to work together, collaboratively, towards the betterment of such a serious issue.

One thing that is concerning, however, where I have to disagree with my esteemed NDP colleague, is more funding to address the issue. As an educator myself, one of the frustrating things is, teachers and administrators don't have the tools and resources, the power, if you will, to enforce. If an individual does something or bullies an individual, what kind of—not punishment, but what are the alternatives for an individual who does that? We need to work with the young individual, but at the same time that's what, as an educator, I do. That's what the guidance teachers do, right? We have other staff members—EAs, ECEs—who work with those individuals.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** They're being cut because my esteemed government's budget is going to do that.

So the funding isn't an issue and I don't see it as an issue. What we need to do is give the—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would suggest that the members go through the Chair if they want

to talk, not to each other. This should come through me, okay? Thank you.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** Sorry. I apologize, Mr. Speaker. You're absolutely correct.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think that we actually need more funding in order to educate the young people about bullying and the seriousness of the impact bullying has. I think Bill 14 is a huge step forward in fighting bullying within our education system, and I honestly think that what the member for Kitchener–Waterloo has done is the correct approach to addressing any issue.

This is a nonpartisan issue. This is an issue that goes beyond political stripes. A young person on the playground being picked on can be a Conservative, a Liberal, a Green Party—it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter, their religion, their creed. What happens, Mr. Speaker, is that we need to make sure that this doesn't happen at all; equality for all across the board. It doesn't matter. Equal: We are all equal, Mr. Speaker. That's what I think Bill 14 definitely addresses, the equality for all. It outlines the parameters which those individuals will face if they do not adhere to what I, as an educator, and as my colleagues in the teaching profession try to do, which is instill good character in individuals.

A good point was made earlier that we, regardless of political stripes—my Liberal counterparts are great individuals. My NDP esteemed colleagues here are great individuals. They come to the House and they have great ideas. They represent their people. This is a nonpartisan issue.

I think the member from Nepean–Carleton had it right as well. She has worked very diligently with local groups in her riding and she's done a fantastic job of reaching out to families and communities who have been embraced and thrust into situations that, quite frankly, are almost unbearable. We have individuals who have taken their own lives, and it's very sad because no one, regardless of their religion, creed, where they live, what their beliefs are, what their value systems are—these are individuals that should be nurtured in our society.

I think Bill 14 addresses that and I think the member from Nepean–Carleton would agree with me when I say that what Ms. Witmer has actually done—and I'll say this again with the stakeholders, listening to them—is an extensive, extensive outreach. “Listen” is the key: Listen to what people have to say. Only by listening can you actually get to the bottom of things and resolve those concerns.

**0950**

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that the NDP is correct. My esteemed colleague from Hamilton Mountain is correct in a sense, and what I'm hearing from my esteemed colleague is that no piece of legislation is perfect. We understand that. That's the humanitarian part of what we do. You're not going to get everything perfect on the first try, but we have to try. And this is why I think, Mr. Speaker, when Bill 14 goes to committee, hopefully when it's in committee, we can actually collaboratively work together to ensure that amendments from various bills—in Bill 13,



I'm sure there are parts that may improve Bill 14. My esteemed colleague here said, "Well, we could introduce Bill 15." In committee, that's essentially what we're doing. We're working towards the betterment of a more perfect piece of legislation that's going to have a positive impact on the lives of so many.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add, as I close today, that it's a great honour to stand here and debate this bill in the sense that we honestly have to take a positive approach. I think Bill 14 is a massive leap towards addressing the issue of this serious nature. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I just want to say that I agree with everything that the member from Northumberland-Quinte West has said. I have two comments in relation to what he said, however. One of them has to do with listening. Listening is always a two-way issue; it's never one-sided. So when one person claims that the other person isn't listening, it's very likely that two parties are not listening, and it's often possible that three parties may not be listening. But you have to remember that unless we mutually listen to each other, it's not going to work. So one-way listening doesn't work, and that applies to all groups, is the first point.

The second point has to do with funding. Not all teachers know how to solve problems. You would know that. Some mediate well, and some don't know how to mediate problems. In some elementary schools and some high schools, some teachers are incredibly frightened to be involved in solving a bullying issue, with individuals potentially being very, very aggressive and teachers not knowing how to deal with that from a physical point of view, or indeed even a social/psychological point of view. So when you say that we are skilled as teachers to be able to tackle that problem, it isn't so.

We need help. Teachers need support and principals need support to be able to do this job well. So when the law prescribes that school boards will have to solve the problems of bullying, it means that you as a teacher, now, and a principal, have an additional responsibility to deal with it, and unless they are trained and unless they are given support, it's not going to be easy. It means another responsibility on teachers that they have to deal with, and that's a problem of funding.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments? The member from Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me a brief opportunity to talk about this bill and the debate that's taking place on this very important bill, Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act.

I'm heartened to hear the comments I'm hearing that we need to work together, that this is an important issue, that we need to ensure that students are protected. These are all steps in the right direction. What's also important, Speaker, is timing. Time is of the essence right now. We need to make sure that we've got protections in our schools as soon as possible. This message of urgency is not just from us, the members. We're not in schools any-

more; we really don't know what's happening. I think all of the members talk to students in schools. This is a message coming from the students.

Like everybody else, I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time in our schools just last week. I do that pretty much every Friday when I'm home. Students don't get this debate. Students don't get this politics. And I don't blame them. They are saying, "Am I going to have an opportunity to ensure that there's programming available in our schools starting this September?" Guess what, Speaker? I couldn't give them an answer, because we don't know what's going to happen.

So my request, my urging to everybody is, let's get together and get working on this. I was really disheartened when I read in the Toronto Star today that Mr. Wilson, the House leader for the Conservatives, said, "We will continue to ring bells and use whatever tactics we can on our side to delay government legislation"—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Ottawa Centre knows we don't use names; we use ridings.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My apologies.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** The House leader said that they will continue to use delay tactics to delay any legislation, and that's not what we need to do, Speaker. We need to pass.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member from Nepean-Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Just to the other member's point, the reason bells are being rung in this place is in opposition to this government's refusal to follow the will of this assembly in calling for a select committee on Ornge and the abuses that were taking place. I just—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member knows that's not the topic. Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** But to point out that our party is trying to delay this is really not quite—it's heifer dust, Speaker, because we know that we all have a vested interest now.

Yes, I actually have been to schools. I went to a few last week—one in your riding—and in fact I've also spoken to a number of other people who have been affected by this, and I must say, people want to make sure we get it right. Doing due diligence is a good thing. Allowing members to speak to this topic, anti-bullying legislation, is important work. If the members opposite really want this to be done ASAP, they've got their tools in their legislative toolbox to do whatever they like. They're that major minority government, as you remember Mr. McGuinty talked about.

I do say this: We have an opportunity to have a fulsome debate, a great discussion here; we are having that. We know that there are parents who are concerned with the legislation. We're going to hear them out at committee. But don't try and shut down the voices of members of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, because we do speak on behalf of our constituents, and we do have a right to our opinion, and we do have a right to share those views.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. The member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I listen to the constituents of Algoma-Manitoulin, and the opinions of my constituents vary in support of Bill 13 and Bill 14, which is why I think there's good in both and which is why I really think that we should sit down and get this done properly. However, you need to have those discussions, and there seems to be an air of darkness here right now, that we can't seem to get to that point.

The last time I rose, I spoke about a young woman. Her name is Candice, and unfortunately—she's from my riding—she made a difficult decision. But what she managed to do is to get a group of us together, and when we sat down, we sat down in what's referred to as a sharing circle. A sharing circle is a First Nation practice. When you sit down, you try and use some of the sacred words that they've used, and also their teachings, words like love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth.

When you look at these words, let's try and use them to get to the point that we need to get to with these two bills. If we love our kids, then let's get this done. If we respect each other across the way, it should bring us to the proper table in order to address the issues that we need to address; and respect means listening to both sides. And then if we take the courage to take that next step in order to get together, to get to that table, that will demonstrate that we are working together in this House. Honesty: It speaks for itself. Let's show the wisdom that we've learned from each other and that we're going to present a bill that is actually going to be beneficial to our kids. The humility: Let's check our partisanship at the door before we get in here, and let's get this done properly for our kids. The truth: Let's keep it, let's live it and go forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Northumberland-Quinte West has a two-minute reply.

1000

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would like to thank my esteemed colleague from Trinity-Spadina, who eloquently expressed his concerns for more funding in education. As an educator myself, I agree that we have to have the funding in place to ensure that not only bullying is addressed but other aspects of making our young people the best-educated individuals on the planet.

Also, to the member from Ottawa Centre, and perhaps the future Minister of Health: I agree that we need to work collaboratively, again, towards this. I hope that, as the member from Algoma-Manitoulin pointed out, it's a matter of respect, Mr. Speaker.

I also am very happy to say that I listen. I truly do try to listen to all sides of what is being presented to me, and I, honestly, would love to work with each of the parties involved in this. I do, however, think that there are certain individuals, or perhaps partisanship sometimes—and I understand partisanship. I do get what partisanship is and what it does, but I think once partisanship gets in the

way of progress on something non-partisan, like a piece of bullying legislation that's actually going to have positive influence and impact on the lives of our young people, surely as mature adults we can sit down and agree.

I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that once these bills go to committee, we can come to some understanding, some appreciation, that is going to be for the betterment of the people which we represent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to speak for a few minutes on Bill 13. It's a bill that, I think, is in the media pretty well every day. In fact, just riding in on the GO train this morning—I'm just going to read from local papers.

On the very front page of the paper that most commuters read: "Teen's Racist Rant Shocks Peers". It goes on to say, "Students at Brampton's Turner Fenton Secondary School said they were shocked by a YouTube video of a girl from their school making racist comments." That is related, because I think we're all talking about cyberbullying and the damage—and with this whole social networking, you're kind of anonymous when you're trashing someone, and that's kind of the growing part.

In fact, another article in the same paper—I just took a few of the pages out; there were three different articles on that same issue: "Nova Scotia to Propose Legislation on Online Bullying". It goes on to say, "Legislation aimed at cyberbullying to be tabled Wednesday in the Nova Scotia legislature is being described by the education minister as a first step in the government's approach to bullying in schools."

It talks about the Minister of Education and says: "For faster government action from the family of a teen who committed suicide.

"Jennex didn't reveal details about the legislation, but she said it would address recommendations set out by a task force on online bullying last month."

So it's clear that the largest and fastest growing of this is the online bullying.

I think if you look at Bill 13 and Bill 14—there's been much said about them—I think it's unanimous that all members agree on a general statement that all forms of bullying are reprehensible and unacceptable. In fact, I think our critic, Lisa MacLeod, has spoken quite passionately and in a very informed way with respect to an incident in Ottawa, on which she's given out a piece this morning, on the Hubley family calling on quick action on this bill.

I think the government and some people viewing say that there's been some inappropriate use of procedure wrangling here to make another point, which isn't related to Bill 13, but it is related to the idea that the government of the day—that's the McGuinty government—should be listening.

Let me say this: I've put on the table a couple of things. In my riding of Durham, which is the community of Uxbridge, Scugog and Clarington, I have called almost



all the members of the clergy: Islam, the imam of that particular persuasion; the Baptist church—all of the churches that would respond directly or indirectly about their impression of this. They want to be considered. All of them want to be considered, whether they're Christian or non-Christian—I would just generalize that way. They are looking for leadership from the church group. We've heard that out here.

But what I'm hearing, most importantly, is that Bill 13 somehow ranks bullying, and that's what I find wrong. All forms of bullying, whether it's your body shape, your colour—whatever it is—are reprehensible, unacceptable. There are certainly going to be children of all persuasions, whether it's their gender orientation—whatever it is. I understand that. I'm a parent of five children. I have nine grandchildren. I've been a school trustee. My wife's a teacher. She's now a trustee. We're engaged on this.

I have a couple of articles here and I won't, in the limited time I've been allowed—I may seek unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, to have more time.

But the issue here is that the parent is the primary educator for sure. I can say, with all due respect, that I would encourage all families to be engaged in that and that the parents have—they have to consult with the experts; I understand that fully. But they are the primary educator, and as such, when I look at all the documents, I want to see a role for the parent.

The provision of opting out of some of the classes would be an appropriate compromise. Opting out, you maybe want to sit down with the parents and explain the reason. Maybe it's a conflict with the particular perspective of those religions. And that's the challenge here. In a nutshell, that's the challenge.

Now, I have talked directly with the conference of bishops and also read the document respecting differences from the Catholic school trustees, and from that document—I've cited it in the House here before—there's about four reasons. But I want to repeat, repeat and reinforce: All forms of bullying and intolerance are unacceptable. Education is the forum for changing your mind, learning, expanding and appreciating, respecting differences. That document says that respecting one another and not taking action to belittle the other person in any way, physically or intellectually or whatever, is where the real essence of this debate is.

Power, in its definition, is the ability to have others do your will. If you look at the study of power, it's the ability to have others do your will or conform with your ideology.

Now, we're seeing that in the Legislature, about how much waste is tolerable. On the McGuinty side, it seems quite tolerable. They wasted billions of dollars on eHealth and Ornge and OLG—you name it. It's intolerant for us, and we discuss it and argue, and the people of Ontario make the decision.

But on this issue here, we've got to move forward. I'd like to see something in place myself for September, some clear rules. But don't forget for one moment that there's lots on the agenda in our schools today. I've listened and heard from schools, even now, about certain agendas that

are being aggressively pushed in the school. I will put that on the record, and I can refute it from parents and students from high schools and elementary schools who are upset with the current curriculum driving an agenda. That's really the issue there. I think parents should have the right of opting out. It might be important for them to sort of sit down and explain their reasons, "It conflicts with the teachings of my faith." I'm putting that on the table.

Now, if we don't like that, then we're moving to a secular model of the world. And I believe that in life our children should be taught that faith is important, whatever faith. That's important.

In law, under the charter, it's called the duty to accommodate. As we found out last summer, certain religions pray during the day, and the public school board was accommodating them in Toronto, which is the proper thing to do if they're praying on a Friday or whatever it is. I'm saying the duty to accommodate will arise. Some faiths will not accept teaching things that are in conflict with the values and teachings of their faith. That's the essence of this whole thing.

Let's get on with it. Let's not force schools. Let's not bully them into having these particular clubs of a particular name so that it satisfies a particular goal. All I'm saying is, we can move forward in consultation, step by step. You can educate people over time to these various combinations that are required. I would say the names of groups. The use of technology in these meetings that may occur—children in the schools are tweeting and twittering all the time on their little BlackBerrys or iPhones; if they're going to be saying things that people are confiding in a meeting, that could constitute them harming themselves in the public by some electronic means. How about the home schooling groups? Are they going to be forced to accommodate to get their diploma or whatever it is? How about the freedom of religion itself?

I think this bill can move forward in an incremental way, looking at and respecting the work from the member, Ms. Witmer, and her Bill 13. But bullying, as the minister has said—as she is saying now with the teachers in their negotiations, "My way or the highway." That's not the way, in a democracy, to move forward. We can deal with bullying. We can respect parents, we can respect students, and Respecting Difference is the document that I'm referring to. It's a document by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. I would encourage it for all members, for your reading. There's an extremely exemplary section in it that I would say is mandatory reading. It's on page 5 and it says, "To insist that others share our beliefs and to eradicate the frameworks that make ... choices ... forced acceptance of beliefs ... is not the hallmark of a ... democratic society," but quite the opposite. I think that is a very profound statement and is something we can learn from here. By me, I should first respect people with differences, and not humiliate or demean them or diminish them, and they should also accept my interpretation of the world as well, respectfully. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this chance.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to welcome Dr. Viran Toor, a dentist from Port Elgin in my riding of Huron—Bruce, who is here today for the Ontario Dental Association's Queen's Park day. Welcome, Viran.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'd like to welcome Girls Government here from Holy Family and Parkdale public. We've got Nicole Cebuan, Sobana Thanablasigam, Carolina Deguzman, Yesi Lhamo, Ivana Mihalovic, Danielle Silva, Helen Costa, Patricia Dumlao, Lobsang Dolkar, Yangchen Domo, Akira Ali, Seemal Syed and Dave Belanger, their teacher, and Tanya Ricci, their teacher. So welcome all to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have the very special honour to welcome for his first visit to the Ontario Legislature His Holiness Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Sri Swami Narendracharya Maharaj, the esteemed Dharmaguru of the Hindus who is visiting us in the Legislature today. He is joined by Harish Gandhe, Kishor Gore and Jay Prakash, who are my friends from the Hindu Heritage Centre in Streetsville. It is a matter of honour for this Legislature, Swamiji, to welcome you.

*Remarks in Hindi.*

Please join us in welcoming them.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to welcome today to the Legislature Sonny Allinson from the Canadian Kennel Club, Heather Mack, Frances Coughlin and Elizabeth Sullivan from the Support Hershey's Bill group, and Sarah Dann, who are all here in the Legislature bright-eyed and bushy-tailed this morning to make presentations to the committee on Bill 16.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Kenora—Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you, Speaker. You should know this one by now.

It's my pleasure to welcome Dr. Les Armstrong from Longbow Lake, who is here for the meetings with the Ontario Dental Association.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'd like the Legislature to welcome Dr. Ivan Hrabowsky from the city of St. Catharines, representing the Ontario Dental Association.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would like to welcome, joining us in the Speaker's gallery no less, Dr. Kevin Roach and Dr. Bruce Harle from my riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke. They're here today with the Ontario Dental Association. Welcome.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to present to the Legislature, sitting in the members' east gallery, a member of the Ontario Dental Association, a great friend of mine, my dentist and an old high school basketball teammate, Peter Hyriniuk.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure to welcome to the House today Dr. Arthur Worth, president-elect of the

Ontario Dental Association. Dr. Worth has extensive background with the Kent County Dental Society, has served with the ODA board of governors and general council. He will soon become the 135th president of the ODA, which, by the way, is 145 years old, just six months older than Confederation. An author of several clinical papers and a proud practitioner in rural Ontario, I'm pleased to count Arthur as a friend and a fellow ball-player.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's my pleasure to welcome Dr. Rick Caldwell to the House today.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm really honoured to recognize Dr. John Thompson over in the members' gallery. He's with the Ontario Dental Association, but more importantly than all of that, he's my dentist from Niagara Falls. So thank you very much, John.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's my privilege to welcome to the Legislature today, from the great riding of Sarnia—Lambton and the Bluewater Bridge duty-free shop, Tania Lee and Peter Brain, and from the Peace Bridge duty-free shop, Glen Mills and Jim Pierce. They're here today representing the Ontario Duty Free Association, who will be hosting a reception in room 230, and I take this moment to invite all members to join us between 11:30 and 1.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today the family of page Shanice Nazareth. Joining us in the members' gallery are her mother, Annette; her father, Cederic; and her sister, Sherece Nazareth.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** J'aimerais prendre l'occasion de remercier M. Michel Gravel, qui est un dentiste de Kapuskasing, ici aujourd'hui pour nous parler.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** I'm glad to introduce—I have my brother Brad Milligan here with us today.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I would like to welcome—although they're not yet in the chamber—the students and teachers from St. Brigid's school in Beaches—East York.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I'd like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature Dr. Diri from the great riding of Scarborough—Guildwood, a member of the Ontario Dental Association.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I regret to inform you that we are well past the time limits established for introductions.

I would take this moment to welcome all of our guests today, and I would ask all of us to join in welcoming all of them to the House today to observe question period.

*Applause.*

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My question today is for the Acting Premier. Since the election just over six months ago, we have heard from a number of people, including Roger Martin, your hand-picked economist



Don Drummond and even the Ontario Auditor General. All of them have told us one very simple thing: Ontario's corporate handouts aren't working. Your lack of leadership has put us on the path towards a \$30-billion deficit and staring directly in the face of a \$400-billion debt. Will you continue to try to spend your way to prosperity, or will you take control of your government and make serious efforts to reduce the size and cost of government?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I was pleased last year when the Auditor General signed off on our budget books and our estimates. I was pleased to appoint Don Drummond. I was pleased to receive his report, with some 362 recommendations. We have acted on all but nine of those recommendations. We have said "no" specifically to nine of them. We did that because we do believe that we need to be continuing to invest in education and health care, full-day learning, smaller class sizes and lower surgical wait times. These are important values, not just for this government but for the people of Ontario.

We've also met the expenditure growth targets that Mr. Drummond has laid out, which the official opposition refuses to acknowledge. In fact, we've been criticized in some circles because, in the first few years, the health number is actually below that forecast by Mr. Drummond.

We've laid out a plan. It's a clear plan to get back to balance that protects the important gains we've made in health and education.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Mr. Speaker, back to the Acting Premier: Your government has spent billions to help out various hand-picked corporations. Indeed, the current budget shows corporate welfare amounting to over \$3.5 billion. I was recently briefed by Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation officials, and we talked about WindTronics. WindTronics is a company that your government handed \$2.7 million of wasted taxpayers' money to, to open in Windsor. Now Windsor families are realizing the 200-job-loss nightmare of your failed corporate welfare policy.

When will you give up on the fantasy that job creation can be achieved by government spending and put forward a real jobs plan?

1040

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Today in Windsor, 8,000 people will go to work at Chrysler Corp. as a result of this government working with the federal government and with the government of the United States to protect those jobs.

In addition, workers across Ontario that feed General Motors and feed Chrysler Corp. are going to work today with good-paying jobs, greater job security. We're seeing a rebound in the auto sector. It's important that the people—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It's not helpful that when I'm standing, other people continue to talk. And it is also not helpful when the answer being given—I hear

heckling from the same side and also the yelling on the other side.

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Those investments were important, and we were happy to partner with the federal Conservative government in spite of the fact that—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, come to order.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —and their provincial cousins opposed it. So there's a long track record of success in places like Windsor, in places all over Ontario, where businesses are operating and running today as a result of careful consideration and investment made by the governments of Canada and Ontario. We stand by those decisions. We'll continue to work with every—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I can tell you, economic recovery will come to Ontario the day Dalton McGuinty loses his job.

Back to the Acting Premier: While it's insulting to Ontario taxpayers to see billions of dollars being wasted by your government, it's more insulting that you're continuing down this path with no plans to reduce corporate welfare and, clearly, no plan to create jobs and grow the economy in Ontario. Your failed \$3.5-billion corporate welfare scheme is just another example of your government's failure to manage the public purse; add that to the money your Liberal government has wasted on eHealth, Ornge and the Mississauga power plant.

When will you stop the waste and stop trying to spend your way out of this jobs-and-debt crisis that you, yourself, created, sir?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I need to respond to this and, at the same time, respect the rules of the House.

The member opposite is trying to have it both ways. He stands in the House today and speaks about corporate welfare, but when he's out in his riding, he staunchly defends giving more money to racetrack owners. That is having it both ways. He says one thing here, something quite different over there, and he's quite consistent with his party.

The leader of their party says we should have adopted every one of Don Drummond's recommendations; no, I think the words were "no cherry-picking." Two minutes later, he rejected the recommendation on subsidies to horse racing.

Sir, you can't have it both ways. You can't stand in here and complain about subsidies to business and then go home to your riding and advocate—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Deputy Premier as well. Over the past week, the Ontario PC caucus has offered strong proof that your budget is nothing

but a weak response to a looming \$30-billion deficit. You, meanwhile, spent your week ignoring our questions, as you spent the past six months ignoring our recommendations. You also ignored the Auditor General who told you that you had to "provide legislators and the public with long-term targets and a strategy for how" you plan "to address the current and projected debt burden."

I couldn't find that strategy in the budget; could you? And if so, what page is it on?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They said they were voting against the budget before they read it. They are continuing to nominate candidates across Ontario.

They stand in here and say no to business subsidies. They go to their ridings and tell the racetrack owners they're going to keep giving them \$345 million a year. They can't have it both ways.

They tell us to adopt all of Don Drummond's recommendations. Let's look at the ones they've rejected. Mr. Drummond said keep LHINs. We are; they said don't keep them. Mr. Drummond called for our wage freeze; they're against him on that. Mr. Drummond talked about the Niagara casinos; they disagree with him on that. Mr. Drummond said not to subsidize horse racing; they said no to that. Mr. Drummond said to introduce school bus competition; they said no to that.

Mr. Speaker, this party has a consistent, well-thought-out plan. We're working with all Ontarians to build a better future, because Ontario rejected them and their right-wing—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

**Interjection:** Another question from talk radio.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** They talk about the radio a lot. You know, when I was on the radio, I could call him what he really is.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There is a way to say things without saying them, and I think the member came close to that, so I'm warning him.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Your responses to our questions, Deputy Premier, over the past week have been pitiful, and you continue to ignore us when we tell you that Ontario needs urgent and immediate action to get our debt under control, but you can't ignore this: RBC said your budget was only "one third of the way there."

Empty gestures and halfway measures will not get it done, Deputy Premier. Where is the rest of your plan?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, that member and his party want an unnecessary election that will put at risk hospital expansions in Cambridge and in Burlington, that will undermine our ability to continue to reduce the deficit—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I want to hear.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** So, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to implement. We will implement a budget that is bringing down the deficit. We will implement a budget

that continues to protect the important gains we've made in health care and education.

They can resort to name-calling, and they can say things in this House that really don't add to the public debate. But I'm confident that the people of Ontario share our objectives; that is, to get back to balance, to build a strong and growing economy, and to protect the gains we've made in education and health care. That's what this government, this party, are all about, and I'm confident the people of Ontario share those objectives.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Your Premier used to say, "We will make sure the debt goes in one direction only: down. We will not add to the provincial debt." He used to say, "We will continue to ... pay down the provincial debt." He used to say, "We need a plan that reduces the debt..."

Now having failed in all of those commitments, you of all people have the audacity to dismiss our right to comment on your budget. You are the Minister of Finance. You are not the king of Ontario. You follow the same parliamentary rules that we do; you do not write them. Sir, you are accountable to the people of Ontario, who we represent, as you do. Now tell them and tell us, where in this budget is your debt reduction plan?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives chose to walk away from any form of negotiations. They have chosen not to do what the people of Ontario want them to do.

**Interjection:** Abdicated responsibility.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** They have abdicated their responsibility as the official opposition. Instead of sitting down and talking with us and the third party, they're out nominating candidates right across Ontario. Instead of having a thorough debate, they choose to use language more attuned to low-rated radio station programs, Mr. Speaker.

1050

I reject their ways. I reject their desire to have an election. The people of Ontario rejected them last fall, and if they insist on an election now, I believe the people of Ontario will overwhelmingly reject them in a general election if that's what they try to force.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Since their election in 2003, the Liberal government has imposed a regressive health tax and an unfair HST on Ontario families. Can the Deputy Premier explain, then, the government's concerns about a tax on high-income earners in Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I would refer the leader of the third party to some work done by Hugh Mackenzie, called Not a Tax Grab After All. We were quite pleased to have the support of people like Mr. Mackenzie, like virtually every major anti-poverty group in this province who said that that was the most progressive tax budget in the history of Ontario. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we



made it more progressive. We introduced the most generous sales tax credit anywhere in the country. People in the lower-income brackets are paying less in overall taxes. That's not me saying it, I say with respect to the leader of the third party. That's from somebody like Hugh Mackenzie, like people from a whole variety of anti-poverty groups.

That was the right thing to do for low-income Ontarians. In fact, it raised taxes on higher-income people but lowered them for lower-income people. We're proud of it, it's working for this province, and it's creating jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Over eight long years, people have been hit with two regressive, unfair tax hikes. They're finding it a little hard to take, Speaker. Now we have an opportunity to make life a little bit better for them.

The Liberal government hasn't hesitated to hit people with unfair taxes. Why won't they try a fair one, Speaker?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I would refer the leader of the third party to a comment that her finance critic made on March 11, 2011, referring to our tax policy. He says, "I mean, the tax burden has gone down on everyone, in spite of what people think. You know, taxes have gone down, literally on all income groups."

Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party has come forward with a number of proposals to try to make the budget better from her party's perspective. We welcome those. We're looking at them. The leader, I think, has done so in the hope of keeping this Parliament working, unlike the official opposition, which is nominating candidates and can't wait to get out and campaign. Lord only knows why, because they'll be handed their heads if they do it.

Mr. Speaker, we stand by our budget choices, and I do look forward to dialoguing further over the next few days with the third party to try and achieve a better budget for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, here's what people have seen: first, a regressive health tax that hit middle-income households the hardest; and then they imposed an unfair HST that strained family budgets even further, all the while handing out billions and billions in tax giveaways to Ontario's richest corporations.

Now, this government has made it clear that they're happy to raise taxes on everyday people. Why are they then afraid to raise taxes on the super rich?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that we are able to find common ground with the third party in some areas. I look forward to continuing the dialogue as we move forward towards the vote next Tuesday.

I think the member needs to remember that, in fact, there was more than \$12 billion of tax relief as part of the 2009 budget that went to all Ontarians, particularly Ontarians of lower and more modest incomes, Mr. Speaker. I have to refer her back to the work by Hugh Mackenzie,

where he said that it was not a tax grab after all, that in fact it was very positive.

I'd also remind her that her NDP compatriots in Nova Scotia raised their HST by two points, and I remind the member opposite that her predecessor wrote to us and asked us to raise the provincial sales tax. We don't think that's the right thing to do.

We believe you've brought forward some constructive proposals to make the budget fair, and I look forward to working with her and her party as we move forward.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In putting my next question to the Deputy Premier, I'll remind him that the Nova Scotia NDP took the HST off home heating, and they just, as a matter of fact, started reducing the HST costs on their people because they know it's an unfair tax.

Rob from Campbellville said this about the budget, though: "I could find nothing good for regular people that go to work every day to keep a roof over their head and food on the table."

The Liberal government has not hesitated to hit everyday families with unfair taxes. Why are they unwilling to make this budget a little more fair?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I would remind the member opposite that the NDP government of Manitoba just raised the tax on gas yesterday. I think it's important to keep these things in mind, Mr. Speaker.

Again, the leader of the third party and the Premier pointed out yesterday—again, Mr. Speaker, I want to respect the Chair—the dichotomy of view in the NDP policy. On the one hand, she calls for a tax increase on the wealthiest. On the other hand, she proposes a big tax cut. Frankly, the leader should know that the people who will benefit the most from that are the people with the biggest houses, the most expensive to heat, the ones with pools—all of that. We need consistency in our tax policy.

Unlike the NDP—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek will come to order

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —we don't want to raise the HST. Unlike the NDP in Manitoba, we don't want to raise fuel taxes. We believe we've found the right ground here. The leader of the third party has brought forward some constructive ideas, and I look forward over the course of the next days to continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Skye from Kenmore writes: "I do not see shared responsibility in this budget. The rich should be contributing far more, instead of penalizing the middle- and lower-income citizens."

The Liberal government has asked people to sacrifice in this province again and again and again. As a result, they're falling further and further and further behind. What do they now say, the Liberal government, to people who don't see the shared responsibility in this budget,

who don't see it at all, Speaker, as New Democrats don't see it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member opposite about a number of the undertakings we have worked together on; first of all, the corporate tax freeze. That was a reasonable response put forward by the New Democratic caucus, and we were pleased to work on that.

Infrastructure: \$35 billion over the next three years, which will create or sustain more than 100,000 jobs. I know the New Democrats support that.

The 30%-off-tuition credit: Over 300,000 students are eligible. We were pleased to work on that together. That helps average families.

We're protecting 10,000 education jobs through full-day kindergarten and small class sizes. I know the leader of the third party shares our values in that area.

The Ontario child benefit: We're continuing forward with it, Mr. Speaker—the largest tax cut for families of modest incomes in Ontario's history.

I look forward to continuing to deal with the leader's ideas, her caucus's ideas, her party's ideas as we move towards the vote next Tuesday.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, people are telling us that this budget simply is not balanced. It hits everyday families the hardest, while those who can most afford it get off scot-free.

Zak from Oakville writes that there is "no plan for jobs, [or] families."

The Liberal government has not hesitated to hit Ontario families with unfair taxes. Why aren't they willing to make this budget a little more fair?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the budget is fair. I've had an opportunity to go over a number of the recommendations that are already in the budget that I know the NDP support.

I'd remind her that today Chris from London announced that we're going to merge the IESO and the OPA. I'll remind her that Kathleen from Toronto has done more to improve the relationship with municipalities than anyone else. Dalton from Ottawa has worked very hard on an anti-poverty agenda for many years.

Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to work with the third party. I hope we can resolve some of the challenges. I know you don't want an election like the Conservatives. You've been responsible in this and progressive. We're pleased to work with you and hopefully to resolve some of these challenges.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I suspect that, while tongue-in-cheek, the member does know that we use, in this House, all members' ridings.

It is now time for the next question.

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#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. This morning in the public accounts committee,

it was confirmed that the entire government—certainly the Ministry of Finance—was fully briefed before Ornge floated a \$275-million bond offer. It was also confirmed that that debt, which was implied to be guaranteed by the government of Ontario, is, according to the secretary of cabinet, not really the responsibility of the government.

Given the scandal at Ornge, I'd like to know from the Minister of Finance, what does he have to say to those bondholders as to who will secure the debt that they hold?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I would remind the member opposite of the entire testimony that was given today. Ornge was consolidated into the financial statements of the province starting in 2007-08. Like other senior Canadian governments, Ontario's consolidated financial statements are prepared in accordance with the accounting standards independently established by the Public Sector Accounting Board. The consolidation of financial information has no bearing on the roles and responsibilities of an agency or organization, its board of directors or responsible ministry for program management.

As Ornge is not a provincial crown agent, the province of Ontario did not guarantee the bond issue, nor was the government's approval of the financing required. That was the testimony. It's consistent with public accounting. It's consistent with the treatment of debt on provincial statements, not only here but across Canada and other jurisdictions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Now we know the minister can read, but we also know that he doesn't understand the question. I made it very clear, Speaker, that what we heard today from the secretary of cabinet was that in his opinion, the government of Ontario is not responsible for that debt.

My question to the minister is, what does he say to the holders of those bonds, \$275 million worth? Given the scandal at Ornge, given the bankruptcy of most of those companies, who will stand good to pay the \$275 million, and who will pay the interest on those bonds? Will the minister tell us who will stand behind that debt?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the secretary of cabinet was entirely correct. The government did not back up the bonds, and bondholders purchased them with that full knowledge and disclosure. That's the way it is.

What we haven't talked a lot about on this is a chap named Kelly Mitchell. Let me tell you a little bit about Kelly Mitchell. He is a Progressive Conservative Party stalwart. He was paid almost \$400,000 by Ornge to lobby and schmooze the PC Party for Ornge and its profits. At the same time, he was on the board of directors for Ornge and five for-profit companies, the same companies that paid Chris Mazza \$1.4 million. Kelly Mitchell was also a top fundraiser and close adviser to Mr. Hudak's leadership campaign. His company donated \$17,000 to the party, 15 candidates, and he personally donated \$7,500. We'll be exploring those—

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister, take your seat. A reminder to all members: When I stand, you sit down.

New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre adjoint. Former Liberal Party of Canada president and Ornge lawyer and financier Mr. Alfred Apps said that the government was fully briefed every step of the way in the development of the web of shell companies at Ornge. He even threw in a chat with the Minister of Finance over cocktails about Ornge practices. He also said that although the government was fully briefed, they never raised a single objection. Is any of that true?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, I followed the testimony given by a number of individuals today. First of all, the secretary of cabinet, who was my deputy minister at the time, informed the committee that at no time had I been briefed on Ornge formally or informally by him and the officials in the ministry.

I can confirm with you that, yes, I think Mr. Apps's testimony is correct: I never met with him; I was never lobbied by him. We did travel in similar social circles, and he did raise the issue of those bonds with me in informal conversations, just like he pointed out that Guy Giorno was very involved through a contract. In fact, I haven't reviewed all the testimony but I will confirm what Mr. Apps said and I can also confirm what the Deputy Minister of Finance at the time said, that the elected officials were never briefed by their department on these issues.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, Alfred Apps claims that the ministry—actually, ministries, and that went on for the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Finance, and even the Premier's office—had been fully briefed every step of the way about the corporate structure, but they only started to react to this in December 2011. How can you explain the disconnect? How can you explain that Mr. Apps himself said that he attended the briefing, that the ministry was fully briefed every step of the way but that only in December 2011 did it become unacceptable, when you knew all along?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Minister of Health moved quickly, responsibly and in a fashion that was open and transparent, in an appropriate time frame, as was identified at the time. We have legislation before this House which will help us prevent this sort of thing from ever happening again. We have this before committee. The OPP are investigating this. The auditor had a good look at this. And so I'm confident that the challenges associated with this file have been well handled by the Minister of Health and by this government. Our challenge now is to move forward and ensure that we continue to build the best and strongest health care system that this province can offer.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The operating funds that our government provides to colleges and universities help ensure that post-secondary education stays accessible, affordable and of top quality. It's very important to note that last month here in our great province of Ontario we achieved the highest enrolment rate among secondary students in a decade. This shows we are well on our way to ensuring 70% of all Ontarians will have a post-secondary education. By introducing the 30%-off-tuition grant program, our government shows its leadership to students and families, ensuring that all Ontarians are able to transition from the best schools in the world to post-secondary education. Minister, how have you ensured that Ontarians will have access to publicly funded post-secondary institutions across the province?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** As you know, Premier McGuinty has made a priority of higher education and public education for a very, very good reason: 70% of all jobs right now in Ontario require apprenticeships, trades, colleges or universities. Our universities and colleges and our trades are doing an excellent job advancing that.

Beyond the simple creation of a sufficiently skilled workforce, we also know that we are second only to California in direct foreign investment. We also know that one of the biggest determinants of where international capital goes is to where the highest-skilled workforces are. So those hard-working young Ontarians who are going to university and colleges now, 210,000 more than eight years ago, are also not only helping their own future, they're one of the largest reasons that we are one of the world leaders in attracting foreign capital investment and generating wealth.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Minister. As we all know, the budget is about choices. That's why our finance minister listened to Ontarians and the choices that Ontarians make. I am proud that our government has included indexing of the tuition reduction plan, unlike the PCs, who are going to reject that in our budget. It's most unfortunate. My constituents in Pickering-Scarborough East keep telling me they don't want an unnecessary and expensive election. They want us to put our partisan issues aside and work together to create the jobs, ensure we have the right education.

Minister, how specifically will the government show commitment to post-secondary education through the 2010 budget and ensure we continue to build on the great investments we've made since 2003?

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**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank the member for Pickering-Scarborough East. There is a very high collaborative relationship between my ministry, Minister Duguid in Economic Development and Innovation and the Ministry of Finance.

The investments that we're making are really extraordinary. Brock University, since we were elected, has

seen a 69% increase in its budget. Nipissing University in the opposition has seen a 92% increase in its budget. UOIT, also in an opposition constituency, has seen a 368% increase in its budget.

While I was supposed to be meeting with my opposition critic to discuss this budget and how we could work, he thought it was more important to be here trying to ring bells. But he should know that Waterloo University and Wilfrid Laurier University, in his part of Ontario, have seen over a 75% increase—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Minister of Finance: I am asking this question because I believe the financial markets will be very interested to know what the finance minister of the province of Ontario has to say about a \$275-million bond offering that is out there that has been taken up by investors. Now we're told that the organization behind that bond offering, namely Ornge, is no longer the entity that it was when that offering was made.

We hear the finance minister tell us that the government of Ontario is not responsible. The organization behind that is the air ambulance service of Ontario. Will the province of Ontario allow Ornge to default on that offering?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm glad that the member raises issues that came up in committee, because we have some issues we'd like to raise in committee.

Will that member and his party agree to have Kelly Mitchell come before the committee? We are given to understand that this person, who was a member of the board of Ornge, made \$17,000 in donations. He made a donation to the leader of your party, the members for Simcoe North, Whitby—Oshawa, Leeds—Grenville, Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, and Thornhill. Those were all contributions. Did he inform any of your members? Did he talk to your members about these issues at all?

So, I would ask the member—we're interested to know—will you agree, here and now today, to bring Mr. Mitchell before the committee so we can understand the full extent of the relationship of your—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** The government House leader will inform the Minister of Finance that anyone who is called by the committee will show up, and if not, we'll issue a Speaker's warrant.

But I want to go back to the question I asked the minister that the financial markets are very interested to hear. Will the Minister of Finance of the province of Ontario allow that \$275-million bond offering to default? Will he stand up and tell us whether, notwithstanding what the agreement said, the government of Ontario will stand behind that debt?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member didn't answer the question. Will they agree to bring Kelly Mitchell before the committee? They're stonewalling in this House in front of the cameras. They're playing the same game they've been playing right from the beginning with this.

It's a simple, simple question, Mr. Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Will they call Mr. Mitchell to appear before the committee? I remind the member that Mr. Mitchell was paid almost \$400,000 to lobby and schmooze you and your party on behalf of Ornge. Will you or will you not agree to call him, or will you continue to stonewall and play silly political games instead of working with us to get at the real truth?

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** To the Minister of Energy: This morning, you announced that the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator will be merged, but, Minister, privatization stays. Privatizations that followed the disastrous 2002 deregulation of the electricity system have led to skyrocketing rates. Will the minister admit that ongoing privatization of local utilities will wipe out any savings that will come from this merger?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I was pleased this morning to have announced the intention to merge and consolidate the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator, a consolidation that the NDP had specifically asked us to consider. We have common ground on this issue.

For months, we've been making announcements in this sector about finding ways for families and businesses to get their electricity supplied at lower administrative cost. We're going to keep doing that.

What we did with the local distribution centre consolidation panel is simply set up an advisory panel to give us some insight into whether those families and businesses would benefit from any form of consolidation. We look forward to receiving their advice in due course.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Minister, no one will disagree that getting rid of some high-paid unneeded executives and CEOs is a good thing. But you know that that panel you've set up is an open door to privatization of local utilities, and you know the impact it will have on the cost of electricity. Will you admit that we would be far better served for you to consolidate all four agencies and stop the privatization initiative?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Over here, we're on the side of families and businesses. Families and businesses want us to deliver power as effectively as possible and at as little cost as possible. So we set up this panel with Mr. Elston, Mr. Laughren and Mr. McFadden to take a look at the 78 distribution companies we have around the province and answer a simple question: Can it be done



more effectively for less, and do those families and businesses benefit?

I think we should find some common ground with the NDP on this: That it is about families; it's about making sure families can better manage their budgets; it's about finding savings wherever we can. I hope, in the months to come, we'll find more common ground in supporting families, as we have in the budget of the province of Ontario.

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is for the Minister of Energy as well. Minister, many of my constituents asked me if more could be done to find efficiencies within our electricity sector. I know that both Hydro One and OPG have been working hard to find efficiencies from within and reduce costs for ratepayers while at the same time ensuring that Ontario families have a strong, reliable and modern electricity system. I know that my constituents appreciate the hard work of these agencies to better serve them on a daily basis. Minister, can you please tell us what is being done to find efficiencies within our electricity system?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Do you know what? It's a really important question from the member for Ottawa—Orléans because he hears from families and businesses in his riding, as I do in my riding; we all do. They want the most effective system at the least administrative cost.

So we've taken a number of steps. The major agencies—Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One—have launched a cost reduction exercise. They're already at half a billion dollars, and they're looking for more.

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When we launched the green energy review, we saw that the prices paid for renewable energy—extremely important—are going down. Last Friday we launched an international benchmarking exercise which will help us in our major agencies, like Hydro One and OPG, further reduce costs. We've launched a review of the local distribution companies to see whether we can get the power delivered for less. Today we announced another step, the consolidation of two agencies.

It's all about delivering it for as little as possible to families and businesses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Minister, for that excellent response.

I know that my constituents will be pleased to hear that the merger between the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** It's strange; every time you talk about energy or conservation or the environment, that group across starts to yell.

We want a more efficient organization that will save families and businesses money. Minister, I know that the Independent Electricity System Operator plays a vital role in managing the day-to-day operation of the electri-

city system and the Ontario Power Authority is responsible for the long-term planning of our electricity supply, as well as ensuring that clean energy comes online. Both of these organizations ensure that Ontario families have a clean and reliable supply of electricity that they can count on tomorrow and into the future.

Minister, how will the day-to-day operations continue during this process to ensure the vital functions of our electricity systems are not compromised?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** That's a good point, because the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity Supply Operator perform extremely important functions every single day. They're both involved in planning. In fact, they are our two largest planning agencies. So bringing them together, we want to not only maintain but build on their planning expertise. That will be better for today and tomorrow.

The IESO manages the market. We're going to make sure that that continues, because that's a very important and independent function. The Ontario Power Authority manages our conservation programs. We've taken great steps, very involved across the province, in ensuring that we only use the power that we need. Those contracts will continue. The Ontario Power Authority also manages the tens of thousands of contracts, which are really ways that families and businesses in the province participate in clean, green renewable energy. Important work—it will continue, just at less cost for the people of this province.

### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Back to the Minister of Finance: I want to bring to the minister's attention just how serious this question is and the fact that this is not about playing politics in a sandbox. This is about—a very serious question to the Minister of Finance—\$275 million of debt that was used by Ontario's air ambulance service to buy a fleet of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft and a number of other assets. The minister is saying that the government of Ontario is not responsible for that debt. They have put into bankruptcy companies that comprise most of that Ornge organization. There is one organization left, and that is the organization supplying the air ambulance service.

My question to the minister is this: Will the government of Ontario guarantee the interest payments and the principal of that \$275-million bond offering?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I repeat for the member what I said right at the very beginning: The government of Ontario will honour its commitments. There would have been a prospectus, a syndicate; all these things would have been very clearly disclosed as to whose obligations are what. So, until he's read those—which I'm quite certain he hasn't, and if he has, I'd like him to share with me the sections that say that Ontario has guaranteed them—we'll look forward to continuing to work on getting this thing back in order and continuing at the committee hearing.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** And that's why we want to hear from Kelly Mitchell.

You know, we do \$35 billion to \$40 billion a year in bond issues, Mr. Speaker. They continue to sell out around the world. They continue to be repaid according to schedule. In fact, indeed, we've been paying them back ahead of schedule.

The government of Ontario will honour all its undertakings, its commitments. I'd be curious to hear what the member's views on the prospectus are and on the syndicate—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to assure the Minister of Finance that I did read the prospectus. If he reads it, he will also see that the government of Ontario is very prominent throughout that entire offering. There is an implied guarantee by the province of Ontario, and now what I want to know is, will the government of Ontario stand behind that? And by the way, the minister introduces a very interesting scenario, because through Infrastructure Ontario there are many, many more offerings very similar to this that offer the same implied guarantee. Yet what we want to know is, is the government of Ontario in fact guaranteeing those bond offerings? Will the minister at least answer that question once and for all?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I won't use the same kind of language that he has, but the word "implied" is very interesting. Obviously, he has read it and he knows what the undertakings are, and it's a shame he chose to play politics before he revealed that in the House.

I should say that Ornge is still responsible for the bonds, and yes, Ornge still has a very good credit rating.

Quit playing games. Call Kelly Mitchell. Let's work together to fix this once and for all.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Ms. Najla Mady of Hamilton contacted my office recently. She is 73 years old and struggling to pay the bills. She is at high risk for a broken hip and takes injections of Prolia for bone strengthening. These injections cost her almost \$400. She said she was counting on a lump-sum income tax refund to pay for her July 3 injection but was shocked to discover that she would not be receiving it because of a change that was made without notice to anyone at all, and without consulting those who are the most impacted. Can the minister explain how he is going to help people like Ms. Mady?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I want to thank the member for his question. In fact, the member, I believe, either has introduced or is about to introduce a private member's bill. We intend to give people choice. We did consult in advance. There were, however—the member is right—a number of people who did not like the way we set things up. I've indicated that we'll change that. I also indicated to the member that I'm quite prepared to work with him

based on his private member's bill. I thank him for raising this case with us, and I'll make sure I follow up with finance and health officials to see if we can be of some assistance to your constituent.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I thank the minister for his considerations, but the bill that he speaks of was tabled a month ago. We understand that the minister and the ministry said that if the bill was tabled, efforts would be made to ensure quick passage, because the minister at that time agreed that changes were unfair. But a month has gone by and nothing has happened.

My question: What action has the minister taken to date to ensure that people will have the choice in how they receive their tax refunds, and when can we expect this bill or something similar to this bill to be passed?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I appreciate the member's inquiry. Unfortunately, the official opposition has been ringing the bells in here, and we can't get things to the floor of the House—blocking important legislative initiatives like that.

I give the member opposite my undertaking to continue to work with you. I do want to thank you for your work on this—a number of my colleagues as well—and I look forward to moving as quickly as we can on this with you.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Since the budget, like others, I've been out in my riding speaking to constituents. During these tough economic times, many were concerned that our government would be making cuts that would hurt them, that would hurt our families, especially those that need our help the most, like the previous government, who cut social assistance rates by over 22%. Through you, Speaker, to the minister, can you please tell the House how this year's budget, Strong Action, impacts social programs for people in my riding?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I thank the member for the question, and she's right: In the recent budget, we had to make some tough decisions. But to reiterate what both the Premier and Minister of Finance have said often, we focused on three key areas: education, health care and the other one, the area of social services. Unlike the party opposite, Mr. Speaker, we did not dramatically slash rates for those on ODSP or Ontario Works. In fact, over the life of this government, we've seen seven increases to those rates, and they were maintained in the recent budget.

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I'd also point out, Mr. Speaker, that moving forward, when you look at what's called the children and social services cluster in the budget, it's actually going to increase by an average of 2.7% over the next three years. In fact, my ministry will be increasing by 3.7%.

We recognize the needs of those who are marginalized, the less fortunate in our society, and we're going to continue to identify that area as a special priority for this government as we move forward.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?**

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you, Minister. I'm pleased to hear that we won't be punishing some of the province's most vulnerable with cuts to social assistance rates. I also know that the social assistance system is currently being examined by the social assistance review commission, so I look forward to seeing their report in June, as I was involved with some of those meetings in our community.

I was also pleased to see that this year's budget allocated an additional \$25 million for residential placements for adults with a developmental disability. Please explain how this investment will help those in need of service across the province.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I thank the member for the question, and I'm pleased that she referenced the social assistance review, which is undertaking one of the most dramatic examinations of our social assistance system in decades. It's being led by Frances Lankin, a former member of this Legislature, as well as Dr. Munir Sheikh, the former head of StatsCan.

As well as the social assistance side of the ledger, my ministry of course also deals with those with developmental disabilities. As the member pointed out, our most recent budget committed an additional \$25 million for people with a developmental disability in urgent need of residential services. This additional funding is based on anticipated need for residential placements for our clients, some whom live with aging parents who can no longer care for their adult children at home. This funding and the placements it creates will also help support the ongoing transformation of the developmental services sector as we continue to move away from the old institutional model to one that's based more on community living.

**GOVERNMENT SPENDING**

**Mr. Rob Leone:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Not only does the government not know or understand how to prepare a proper budget to deal with the debt crisis and the jobs crisis that we have in the province of Ontario, but the government is also confused about whether they authorized robocalls be placed in my riding, in the riding of Burlington and other ridings across the province of Ontario.

In the Legislature, the finance minister seemed very familiar with the content of those robocalls, but in the scrums outside this place, he wouldn't commit to having knowledge about them. So since the finance minister is out of the loop on this question, maybe I'm going to ask the Deputy Premier if he was aware of these robocalls and if the Liberal Party actually authorized them.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** When I became aware of them, Mr. Speaker—I'm glad they went out, because they told the people of Cambridge that he's voting against their hospital expansion. They told the people of Cambridge that he wants an election. The people of Cambridge want their hospital, they want that expansion; the people of Cambridge do not want an election.

They know that he's scheduled his nomination meeting, Mr. Speaker. Instead of working with us to pass a budget that will build the hospital, the hospital expansion, he chooses to schedule a nomination meeting.

So yes, we're going to do phone calls, we're going to knock on doors, we're going to go into Cambridge and we're going to tell the people of Cambridge that that member, his leader and his party want to kill the hospital expansion in Cambridge. Someone has to stand up for Cambridge. It's unfortunate their local member won't.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Be seated.

*Supplementary?*

**Mr. Rob Leone:** It's quite clear that in one personality the finance minister really is going to be confused.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm trying to hear your own member's question, and that's it—here too.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Oxford, come to order.

*Supplementary?*

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The April 13 edition of the Windsor Star says that the finance minister is looking for a campaign manager. Who's gearing up for an election, Minister?

As a result of the Liberal leader's authorization and actions, Mr. Speaker, I have sent an official complaint to Elections Ontario to investigate the robocalls and the potential illegality of those calls. I am encouraging all citizens, like Tony Malvar, to do the same thing in Cambridge.

It is clear that the government has so much contempt for the people of Ontario that they have refused to accept the results of the last election and their minority status by governing like they were a majority.

They want to go back to the polls. They're gunning for it. They're putting Liberal ads on the radio. They're putting them in ads—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member did not impress me.

*Answer.*

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm less concerned about cheap politics than getting that hospital in Cambridge done, and I want to get the hospital in Burlington done next. At least that member hasn't scheduled her nomination, that I'm aware of.

I would urge the member, work with us. Do what the third party is doing. Instead of scheduling nominations, work on your hospital. That's what you were elected to do.

This party, this government will stand up for the people of Cambridge. Why won't you, sir? You're not representing your constituents. Let's make it work. Let's make it work together to provide the best health care possible for the people of Cambridge and the Cambridge region.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

New question. The member from—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I am disappointed in the fact that you know I'm standing and there continues to be heckling.

New question.

## CURRICULUM

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Minister of Education. The Bealart program in London has been providing high school students with an excellent art education for almost 100 years, but access to this program, which is being provided to students who have completed their grade 12 requirements, is being threatened by the McGuinty government's plan to charge fees for fifth-year credits. Over 3,000 people have signed a petition. Why won't this government listen to the people and stop permitting the Bealart program to be in jeopardy?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Let me be absolutely clear that, unlike Don Drummond's recommendation to charge students for credits, we will not charge any Ontario student for their credits.

Let me also be absolutely clear that although Ontario moved to eliminate the fifth year of high school more than a decade ago, we continue to see 13% of our cohort continue in that fifth year.

We want to work with our partners in education, work with our school boards, our guidance counsellors, our parents and our students to plan a successful journey through high school for our students so that they complete it and graduate in four years.

We will work with our partners. This is about more students graduating.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Charging fees for fifth-year credits will threaten the viability of a renowned educational program like Bealart—and hitting families with costs they can't afford. Why is the McGuinty government willing to deny Ontario families access to the public education they need to succeed?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'll repeat again, because I think my friend opposite was not listening: We will not charge students to take their courses.

What we are doing is working with our partners. The students should work with their board. The work that we're doing in the province to ensure that more of our students graduate and have a successful future is about ensuring that we work with them and continue to see success.

Students like this and programs like this are not meant to be impacted by this initiative.

We look to continue to work with our partners across the province to ensure that more students, not less, graduate.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Sarnia on a point of order.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to again invite all the members to room 230 for the reception from the Ontario duty-free people.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I would like to welcome to the Legislature Dr. Vipin Mithia. He's a friend, a supporter and has been a dentist in Mississauga for the last 22 years. I want to extend to him a very warm welcome.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'd like to recognize a number of people from my riding: Ananya Majumder, Chandras Swargam, Indra Ali, Asgar Ali, Phillip Niedzielski, Haruko Cornish, Govind Kantawalla and Ramila Kantawalla.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'd like to warmly welcome the president of the Ontario Dental Association, Dr. Harry Höediono, who's from the riding of Kitchener-Waterloo.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to welcome guests from my riding of Durham. They're members of the Central East Local Health Integration Network: Wayne Gladstone, the chair; Deborah Hammons, the chief executive officer; James Meloche, senior director of systems; Paul Barker, senior director of finance; Katie Cronin-Wood, communications; and Karen O'Brien, a very good friend, who's the communications coordinator. They gave us a briefing on the Central East LHIN action plan.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'd like to welcome Dr. Ron Yim, from Burlington. He sits on the board of directors for the Ontario Dental Association and is part of the zero tolerance task force.

I'd also like to welcome Dr. Larry Pedlar. He's on my board as well, here today from Burlington.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci, monsieur le Président, de m'accorder quelques secondes. Le D<sup>r</sup> St-Aubin, un dentiste de Sudbury, a pris le temps de descendre pour venir nous voir ici à Queen's Park. Je voudrais lui souhaiter la bienvenue.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to welcome Dr. Don Friedlander, from Ottawa, and Dr. Khaled Hashem, who is also visiting from Ottawa. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Absolutely none of these were points of order, but we're glad our guests are here.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Today I'd like to introduce here at Queen's Park for the Ontario Dental Association day—they're also here for the presentation of a bill that I'm going to have in a few minutes. I'd like to welcome ODA president Harry Höediono; board members Dr. Ron Yim, Dr. Victor Kutcher, Dr. Raffy Chouljian; dentists Dr.



Peter Fendrich and Dr. Stephen Abrams; ODA executive director Tom Magyarody; and Frank Bevilacqua, director of professional, government and component society affairs; as well, past president Dr. Lynn Tomkins. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Dr. Wendy Low from Orléans, a dentist. I hope that you enjoy your day here at the Legislature.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to introduce a friend of mine from my constituency and a great help to my campaign last October, John Nater.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I, too, want to recognize our health partners from the ODA, but I want to make a mention of Dr. Raffy and his work with the Brush-a-mania program. As a great Rotarian, he has been giving and leading the charge on Brush-a-mania province-wide every March.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** They're not in the chamber, but I know members enjoyed their products over the lunch hour from the Ontario Duty Free Association. From my riding of Leeds-Grenville and the Johnstown Duty Free Shop and the 1,000 Islands Duty Free, we had Heather Howard, Carl Donovan, Brian Allen, Jeff Butler and Andrew Butler. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'd like to rise to welcome Willa, Katie and Glynnis from City View alternative school, grade 7 students. They're here helping us on a campaign to electrify the train in our neighbourhood.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I want to introduce Julie Woodyer, campaign director for Zoocheck Canada. She is here in the members' gallery representing thousands of Ontario residents who support my private member's bill which I'll introduce later on today.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ARBITRATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is now time for members' statements. The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Addington.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'm going to get some cue cards, Speaker, if you don't mind, next time, and we'll have the four of them up.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It's the longest string of names for a riding, but the member may proceed.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. In a few moments I will be tabling a private member's bill entitled the Trust in Arbitration Act. For several years now we Conservatives, along with countless others, have told this Liberal government that Ontario's arbitration system needs to be fixed for the broader public service, or, in light of our recent and poor economic performance, Ontario's broader public hindrance. These requests go unheeded and ignored. The McGuinty government

continues to hide behind its broken arbitration system and all its flaws while doling out exorbitant raises to Ontario's broader public hindrance. They have refused time and time again to amend the dispute resolution mechanism. They refuse to include clauses that reflect the employer's ability to pay.

The Trust in Arbitration Act will provide real action to fix Ontario's broken arbitration system, action the Liberals' own hand-picked economist, Don Drummond, recommended, yet they conveniently ignored it.

This bill will establish an independent commission of arbitrators who must abide by the legislative mandate, and not treat it solely as a guideline. We Conservatives have a clear, concise plan to rein in government overspending. Clearly the government is out of ideas. However, they're free to use ours any time.

### BANKING FEES

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** A constituent contacted my Welland office recently to raise an issue that seems to be escalating out of control, and that is banking fees. Banks may be federally regulated, but they are answerable to their customers.

Lucy Labenski is a retired TD Canada Trust employee and not happy with her former employer at all. She recently received a letter from TD indicating that the rates for renting a safety deposit box are going up 40%, a lost key fee is increasing by 1,000% and a drilling fee is going up 96%. I guess their fourth-quarter profit, reported in November, of \$1.7 billion, or a 60% increase over the previous year, is not enough.

Lucy knows well that the maintenance on these boxes is very low. The lost keys and drilling are rare events. They want \$50 to replace a lost key. Gaston Godbout of Avenue Locksmith in Welland says his replacement charge to TD Canada Trust is five bucks.

Canada's five big banks made a record combined profit of \$22.4 billion last year and still feel the need to nickel-and-dime their customers with fees for everything. Lucy says these are a blatant money grab.

It would be nice if the government could ensure consumer protection from these escalating bank fees, but giving them corporate tax breaks seems to be a priority for the McGuinty government.

### TABLE HOCKEY

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** In the early 1970s, I was one of the grandfathers of organized table hockey, along with organizers Rick Sorci in Chicago, Sidney Stutz in Detroit and Bob Stampleman in New York. We established and ran the World Table Hockey Association.

Table hockey went into hibernation with the advent of video games in the 1980s. Recently, we're seeing a North American revival of table hockey, and it's my pleasure today to congratulate the organizers of the recently held Canadian Table Hockey Championships, which took place at the Ricoh Coliseum in Toronto.

I'd like to recognize the hard work of David Kraehling of Mississauga, Mark Sokolski of Petawawa and Sid Kloosterman of Peterborough, who have once again brought together the table hockey fraternity and organized table hockey tournaments.

Sid drives to every tournament, does the website and keeps track of statistics. Mark has developed a tournament model and partnered with Big Brothers, Big Sisters, on whose behalf the tournament raised money. David handles promotion and player relations.

I saw some familiar faces from the 1970s there as well, and I say a special hello to old friends Ron Marsik of Chicago, Lou Marinoff of New York and Mike Pope of Toronto. Welcome back and welcome home, table hockey.

### AWARDS IN MILTON

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I'm very pleased to rise today and talk about the Milton Chamber of Commerce Awards.

Businesses and residents of Milton add vibrancy, uniqueness and prosperity to our town of Milton. On April 13, the Milton Chamber of Commerce acknowledged the work of some of Milton's outstanding businesses and citizens. Since 1981, the chamber's annual community awards gala has celebrated exceptional citizens of Milton, acknowledging their contributions to the town.

I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the following people and businesses who were presented with awards this year.

Brad Clements received the Lifetime Achievement Award, and given the time and effort that he has put into so many community events around town, a very well-deserved award.

Wendy Schau received the Citizen of the Year Award. Of course, Wendy was a former councillor, a community activist, and she's worked on a tremendous number of projects in the town of Milton.

Destination Campbellville Community Association-Campbellville Pond Park received the Citizen Improvement Award. Again, this is a very active association which works on a tremendous number of projects around the town.

Joyce Hagevik received the Volunteer of the Year Award. Unfortunately, Joyce received this posthumously. She's somebody who will be sadly missed in the town of Milton.

MinMaxx Realty received the Business of the Year Award for businesses with 99 employees and less. I think it speaks well of any business that wins an award. It speaks to their integrity, it speaks to their hard work and it speaks to the service that they give to their customers.

Mattamy Homes received the Business of the Year Award for businesses of 100 employees or more, again speaking to integrity and service.

Lesley Mansfield from Prosperity ONE Community Banking and Financial Services received the Business Person of the Year Award.

Thank you all for making Milton the prosperous kind of community that it is.

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### TOURISM

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Two weeks ago, this government announced that it will be closing tourist information centres in the border communities of Fort Frances, Rainy River and Kenora, despite our region's unique role in importing hundreds of millions of dollars into our economy from other provinces and the United States.

The minister says that this decision will allow the province to focus on online marketing and travel apps for phones. The minister ignores the fact that needed infrastructure is not in place in our region. Many communities still rely on dial-up technology, while much of the region is a dead zone for cellular technology, rendering these apps useless.

The minister says that the numbers show a reduction in visits to the centres, yet his department has been delaying the release of these numbers, citing the need to collect the data as the reason. This begs the question: How can the minister make a decision of this magnitude without knowing the numbers? Through other channels, we have obtained some of the numbers, and they contradict what the minister is saying.

Since the announcement, my office has collected thousands of signatures from around the riding and from other regions across the north, including as far away as Sault Ste. Marie. I have been presenting them daily and will continue to do so, and they continue to pour in.

Speaker, our tourism industry has thrived despite poor marketing decisions made by this ministry in southern Ontario. Once again, we see a decision made by bureaucrats who simply do not understand our region or its needs. This decision needs to be reversed.

### ELECTRIC VEHICLES

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** This past Friday, the sparks were flying at my Ajax-Pickering constituency office. My wife and I were part of an electrifying Volt presentation by our good friends Jason Easton and Phillip Petsinis from General Motors. The Volt is a lithium-ion battery-powered electric-drive vehicle with a range of 40 to 80 kilometres and an engine generator providing up to 500 additional kilometres. Chevrolet put the pedal to the metal and started shipping the Volt to customers last September, and it is currently available at some dealers in Durham region.

I'm glad to see that our government is supporting the electric car. The province is offering incentives to encourage Ontarians to purchase plug-in cars. Rebates starting at \$5,000 and going up to \$8,500 have been available to those who purchased hybrid and battery electric vehicles after July 1, 2010, and green licence plates are now available to drivers of such electric vehicles to use carpool lanes, even if there's only one person in the vehicle.



The province's vision is to have one out of 20 cars in Ontario electrically powered by 2020. For every 10,000 electric vehicles on the road, it is estimated that there will be 40,000 tonnes less of CO<sub>2</sub> polluting the air annually, which is like taking 8,500 gasoline-fuelled cars off the road.

In light of Earth Day on April 22, Ajax Environmental Affairs Week and the town of Ajax green days, I welcome the Chevrolet Volt, and I certainly welcome its positive effect on our green energy economy and the air we breathe, thanks to the province of Ontario's support.

## HOCKEY

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm proud to say that Huron-Bruce is rich in hockey talent, including 1972 summit series hero Paul Henderson, Stanley Cup winner Boyd Devereaux and Carolina Hurricanes goaltender Justin Peters. There are many other provincial champion high school, OMHA, and ladies' teams as well.

This past weekend marked the provincial ladies' championships in Toronto, and once again in the finals, two teams from Huron-Bruce squared off in the Bantam B championship game: South Huron and Walkerton. Having made that same trip many times before with Deidra, the youngest in our family, representing the Belmore and Teeswater teams, I would like to recognize the importance of the support needed to get to this level of hockey and the commitment that generates memories that last a lifetime. I thank the parents and the coaches from South Huron and Walkerton for their commitment to their children. Congratulations to the Walkerton Capitals for winning the provincial B championships.

I want to share with you that there was a particular player that many of you will know. Alli Meyer was a member of the Walkerton Capitals, and Alli was also a page in the first session of this Parliament in the fall. She also celebrated her birthday with this championship win.

As this is National Volunteer Week, a special recognition goes out to all those who volunteer their time and talent to keep the spirit of sport alive in our communities.

## DAVID WEATHERHEAD

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** It is with great sadness today that I announce the death of David Bennington Weatherhead. On March 25 of this year, David passed away peacefully at the age of 84.

David was first elected as a member of Parliament for Scarborough West in 1968 and was re-elected in 1980. During his time in office, David served as the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs and later to the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

David grew up in Toronto, where he attended North Toronto Collegiate. He went on to graduate from the University of Toronto in 1950, then went to Osgoode Hall Law School in 1954, before joining his father's law firm, where he practised for 57 years.

David was a passionate father, grandfather, public servant, Maple Leafs and Blue Jays fan. The loving father

of five children and grandfather of six grandchildren, David also leaves behind his sister and two brothers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the exceptional staff at the Houses of Providence for helping to take care of David during the latter years of his life.

A celebration of David's life will be held next Saturday, April 28, at Mount Pleasant Cemetery, where his family and friends will have the opportunity to reminisce about the life and times of a remarkable public servant and a proud Canadian.

## HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I rise today to commemorate Yom ha-Shoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day. Yom ha-Shoah takes place every year on the 27th day of the Jewish month of Nisan; this year, that day is today. It is a day dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust—a day of great significance, especially in my riding of Thornhill, which is home to the largest Jewish community in Ontario.

We know that the Holocaust was the largest mass genocide in the 20th century, and sadly it was neither the only nor the last genocide the world has experienced since that time. This is another important reason why we must take the time each year to remember the victims of that atrocity. Especially as the years go by and the number of Holocaust survivors diminishes, it falls to all of us to keep the memory of the victims alive.

That's why in 1998 my PC colleague Ted Chudleigh introduced a private member's bill to annually recognize Yom ha-Shoah. That's why today Ontario schools and post-secondary institutions are holding assemblies, lectures and ceremonies dedicated to those who suffered the horrors of that tragedy. That's why many of us will attend events in our own ridings, or others, to mark this day of remembrance tonight.

Each year, Yom ha-Shoah helps us to pass the memory of Holocaust victims on to future generations, so that they learn the lessons of history; so that they guard against the hatred, fear and intolerance that fuelled the Nazi attempts to annihilate the Jews, gypsies and minorities of Europe; so that the world never forgets.

It is the very least that we can do to honour the memories of those who perished in the single greatest man-made tragedy the modern world has ever witnessed.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AMENDMENT ACT (TREATING SPOUSES), 2012

### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PROFESSIONS DE LA SANTÉ RÉGLEMENTÉES (TRAITEMENT DES CONJOINTS)

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 68, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Again, I want to thank the ODA for their guidance on this matter.

This bill amends the Health Professions Procedural Code, which is a schedule to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

Currently, subsection 51(1) of the code provides that a disciplinary panel of a health profession must find that a member has committed professional misconduct if he or she has sexually abused a patient. Subsection 51(5) of the code requires the panel to reprimand the member and, in certain cases, revoke the member's certificate of registration.

The new subsection 51(5).1 of the code provides that the panel is not required to reprimand the member or revoke his or her certificate of registration if the patient was the member's spouse at the relevant time.

Thank you, Speaker.

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#### ELEPHANT PROTECTION ACT, 2012 LOI DE 2012 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ÉLÉPHANTS

Mr. Berardinetti moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 69, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to protect elephants / Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario afin de protéger les éléphants.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just rise to explain the bill. It amends the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. The amendments provide that the use of an electronic prod, a bull hook, an ankus, a pole or similar implement or device on an elephant be prohibited. The amendments also prohibit the use of chains, ropes or similar devices to restrain an elephant. These prohibitions are subject to certain exceptions. Basically, we're trying to remove these items because items like a bull hook become weapons and harm animals such as elephants.

#### TRUST IN ARBITRATION ACT, 2012 LOI DE 2012 SUR LA CONFIANCE DANS L'ARBITRAGE

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act to provide for a trustworthy resolution of disputes during collective bargaining in certain sectors / Projet de loi 70, Loi prévoyant un règlement fiable des différends lors des négociations collectives dans certains secteurs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. From the explanatory note, the Trust in Arbitration Act, 2012, creates the independent arbitrator's commission and provides that certain collective bargaining disputes in the public sector shall be resolved by the commission. In particular, the act specifies that disputes between parties respecting matters for which a conciliation officer has been unable to effect a collective agreement under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, the Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act, the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, 2006, or the Police Services Act shall be resolved by the commission.

Power is given to the Lieutenant Governor in Council to prescribe other disputes that are to be resolved by the commission. When the commission is required to resolve a dispute, the chief commissioner will choose a commissioner or panel and type of panel to resolve the dispute and will also choose the method of dispute resolution to be used. The dispute must be resolved within 60 days after the chief commissioner chooses the method of dispute resolution.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Sundown tonight will mark the beginning of Yom ha-Shoah, Holocaust Memorial Day. It is a day to remember the innocent victims of the Holocaust and honour the survivors. It's also a day to reflect on and learn from those years of unspeakable horror.

Six million Jewish men, women and children were murdered under a state-sponsored genocide. On Yom ha-Shoah, we pause to remember them.

In the shadow of all that was lost, those who survived built new lives for themselves. They raised thriving families and forged new communities.

For some, their journey out of the nightmare led them to Canada and Ontario. Pursuing the dream of a new life, these remarkable people worked hard, made sacrifices and prospered. And our province is the richer for their invaluable contributions. Their lives are remarkable stories of courage, resilience and unbreakable spirit.

One of the great lessons of the Holocaust is that constant vigilance is needed to protect the values we treasure. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it has been said that all



that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing. So today, let us count ourselves among the vigilant. Let us have zero tolerance for anti-Semitism, violence, racism and hatred, and let us strive for greater justice and compassion.

On this Yom ha-Shoah, we turn our hearts to the victims and pay tribute to the survivors, and we re-dedicate ourselves to the pledge: Never again. In so doing, let us renew our commitment to speak out as one, to protect the dignity and worth of every single individual.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Responses.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** On this Holocaust Remembrance Day, I join with people across the province, and indeed across the globe, in remembering the systematic persecution and murder of more than six million Jewish people throughout the Second World War. As we remember those who lost their lives, we're forever reminded to firmly stand against all forms of discrimination, intolerance and hatred.

The legacy of the Holocaust also reminds us to be vigilant of those who stand against freedom, democracy and the rule of law. Prompted by this human tragedy, these values are now enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Adopted by the UN in 1948 and written by Canadian John Peters Humphrey, this document established clear protections for those facing the threat of genocide and implores nations to take decisive action against those who may try to perpetrate another such crime against humanity.

After nearly 70 years, the resilience and industry of survivors continues to be embodied in Ontario's thriving Jewish communities. Over 200,000 and growing, Ontario's Jewish population is the largest in the country. For these reasons, Ontario established Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom ha-Shoah, in 1998, an effort that was led by my colleague Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh. Most recently, the federal government, under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, established the Office of Religious Freedom in order to vigorously oppose all forms of religious persecution, no matter where it may take place.

The Holocaust stands alone in history as not only a heinous crime against the innocent, but a crime against the fundamental morals we hold as Canadians and as global citizens. Today, as we pay tribute to those who lost their lives, I'd ask that we not only remember these victims in our thoughts but also in our actions.

Let us speak truth to those who spread hate. Let us celebrate the strength of survivors and condemn those that preach intolerance. May we be steadfast in our defence of freedom, unwavering in our commitment to democracy and resolute in our protection of the human spirit. Never forget. Never again.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'm humbled to stand here in this House and speak to the issue of the Holocaust. I grew up as a young Jewish kid in a secular family with my brothers and sister.

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I learned about the Holocaust mostly through children's books that my mom and dad would read to me and

to my brothers and sister, and we read those with children's eyes, with innocent eyes. We read about Anne Frank, and we knew about the absurdity of this world and the catastrophe that can happen. We also learned about Martin and Malcolm and Rosa, and we learned about Nelson Mandela and Gandhi. We learned to commit to live in this world in a way that stood up against oppression of all forms.

I'm here today to remember the victims of violence around the globe, in the Holocaust, and in the violence that happens every day in the city and in this province, and the history of violence that we need to remember here in Ontario, too; and just to recommit to deepening democracy, to standing up against the seeds of fascism when people lose hope in the democratic system, and to making sure we stand up for all oppressed communities here.

## PETITIONS

### IMMIGRATION POLICY

#### POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities."

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I most certainly support this petition, Speaker, will affix my signature and send it to you via page Noah.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment," Mr. Bradley, "to initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt."

I recommend that this be carried forward in the review of the Aggregate Resources Act before a standing committee. I'm pleased to sign and support this petition and present it to Georgia.

## TOURISM

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I have a petition here from some people in the Dryden—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Order.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I have a petition here from some people in the Dryden area.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Excuse me. Everyone was quiet when you read your petition. I would appreciate it if you wouldn't be standing there, shouting across the floor when someone else is trying to read theirs.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** No point of order. Thank you very much.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you, Speaker. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas tourism is a vital contributor to the economy of northwestern Ontario, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars into the province's economy from other provinces and the United States, unlike other regions in the prov-

ince whose target demographic is people who already reside in Ontario;

"Whereas northwestern Ontario's tourist economy has been under attack by government policies such as the cancellation of the spring bear hunt," the HST, "the strong Canadian dollar and difficulties passing through the Canada/United States border; and

"Whereas studies have shown that tourism in the northwest nets significantly more money per stay than other regions of the province, in part due to visitors frequenting historical sites, parks and roadside attractions that they learn about through travel information centres;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To keep the travel information centres in Fort Frances, Kenora and Rainy River open permanently to ensure that northwestern Ontario maximizes the benefit of our tourist economy."

I am pleased to support this, and I will give this to page Safa to bring to the table.

## ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which states:

"Whereas creating a safe and positive learning environment is an essential part of helping students succeed in school;

"Whereas bullying, homophobia and gender-based violence are unacceptable;

"Whereas we need to do more than just tell bullied kids it gets better—we need to work together to make it better now;

"Whereas the Accepting Schools Act would, if passed, help to end bullying in our schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the elected members of all parties help make our schools safer and more inclusive by supporting the Accepting Schools Act."

I certainly support this petition. I'm going to affix my signature and send it with page Ranbir.

## HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry...;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG...;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:



"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I'm happy to attach my name to this petition.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. It's so good to have you in the chair.

I submit the petition on behalf of the horse racing and breeding industry in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I will affix my name, as I have with all other petitions, and submit it with Sabrina.

#### IMMIGRATION POLICY

##### POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have here a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Respect for Diverse Communities

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the depart-

ments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

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"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I certainly support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to you via page Dia.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government has announced that the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. will end its Hiawatha racetrack slots operations in Sarnia on March 31, 2013, even though the current agreement does not expire until 2018;

"Whereas the end of this program will cost the city of Sarnia 140 jobs immediately and \$1.5 million a year in gaming revenues, not to mention potentially 60,000 jobs across the province if the program is scrapped entirely;"

There was "no consultation with the community, employees or owner/operator of the local facility;

"Whereas the McGuinty government continues to put more and more Ontarians out of work due to its ill-conceived, ad hoc decisions, including, in Sarnia, the loss of 80 jobs at the local jail, 100 jobs at Lambton generating station and numerous others due to high energy costs on businesses;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the McGuinty government stop risking thousands of jobs in Ontario and \$1.5 billion in potential revenue by mismanaging the racetrack slots program."

I agree with this petition and will sign it.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers have been paying over millions in extra charges on their hydro bills to help retire the debt. The amount collected to date as per the Auditor General's report is \$8.7 billion, but the amount owing was \$7.8 billion;

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers are asking, where is the money being invested?

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers are asking why this was not addressed at the time the debt was paid;

"Whereas electrical rates have increased with the new creation of green energy coming online, to include solar and wind, refurbishment of nuclear plants, the deregulation of Hydro One;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows to obtain answers to the following questions:

"How much of the debt remains?

"When will it be eliminated from Ontario taxpayers' hydro bills?"

I will present it to page Carley. I am in full agreement with this petition.

#### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

"Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition on behalf of all the citizens of Ontario who have signed it.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We were having bets back here, and you'll understand why pretty soon.

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario "to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which states:

"Whereas a progressive Ontario budget calls for bold and decisive deficit reduction action to ensure that Ontario remains the most attractive and competitive place in North America to set up or relocate a business, raise a family or build a career; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has introduced a budget that sets out a five-year deficit reduction, leading to a balanced budget by fiscal year 2017-18, while preserving Ontario's progress in infrastructure, health care and education; and

"Whereas the 2012-13 Ontario budget proposes \$4 of expense reduction for every dollar raised in new revenues, with such expense reduction including implementation of key recommendations in the Drummond report, eliminating overlap and duplication, and compensation restraint in the Ontario broader public sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the elected members of all parties support the comprehensive set of financial measures and expense reductions proposed in the 2012-13 Ontario budget to enable Ontario to balance its budget on schedule; enhance its world-leading position; and attract, build and retain the people, careers and companies to build a strong Ontario for generations to come."

I certainly support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to page Constantine.



## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## 2012 ONTARIO BUDGET

## BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2012

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 2, 2012, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Leader of the third party.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In the week since we last debated the proposed budget, a lot has changed. But for New Democrats the same fundamental problems remain. This is a budget that leaves everyday people falling behind, and I, along with this amazing team of New Democrats that I have the very distinct honour to serve with, had to make a big decision.

Now, for us the first step was really quite a simple one: We decided to talk to people. We asked the people of Ontario to tell us what they thought, and they responded. Nous avons écouté; nous avons entendu. We heard from tens of thousands of people. A lot of people simply don't want an election, but many, many people think it's worth having one over this budget.

Some people are worried about the lack of a jobs plan. Some are worried about the impact of cuts on health care. Some feel that they're being asked to take yet another hit to the family budget, while those who can most afford to pay keep getting the breaks. But two things were very, very consistent: They felt they had not been heard and they worried that the budget would leave them falling further and further behind.

Now, the second step was a little bit harder. We could either roll up our sleeves and work hard to try to get some real results for folks, or we could throw up our hands and simply walk away. Speaker, the path of easy, simple opposition to everything can be very tempting. It frees you of having any new ideas and it frees you from defending those ideas. Trust me, I know many people want us to take that route. But it's exactly what's turning people off of politics and making them cynical about the possibility for real change.

You know, we've seen all of the chest-thumping from both the government side and the opposition benches: the blame games, the phony bravado, the focus on ourselves. And people, the people who sent us here, Speaker, those are the people who get lost in the shuffle.

We're trying something harder. We're showing the people of this province that we're willing to make minority work. But we can't do it alone, Speaker. We need to work together to make that happen. We're ready to do that, because New Democrats have a plan to make this province a better place. Our plan is about a fairer Ontario. It's no secret that the difference between the very rich and the rest of us—that gap—continues to grow in our province. Incomes right now are as concentrated as they were in the 1920s. After inflation is taken into account, the average hourly wage for working people in

Ontario hasn't changed since 1991. Most people are getting by with less.

1550

But of course, there are always the exceptions. Canada's CEOs are doing better than at any other time in our history. In fact, by 3 p.m. on January 1, they'd already collected more in pay than the average person earns in an entire year. There's growing evidence that in a society where people at the top have thousands and thousands of times more wealth than those people at the bottom, it doesn't just hurt those at the bottom. It hurts everyone, even the people at the top. It's the wrong direction for our province, yet for well over a decade it's where we've been going. It's where this government has been heading us and where governments before it have sent us.

While those at the top have benefited from corporate tax giveaways, from capital tax cuts and boutique tax measures, everyday families pay higher bills for private power; they pay user fees in classrooms and hospitals; they pay unfair regressive taxes like the HST. There's no wonder the gap is growing. The decisions government makes have made that gap grow.

New Democrats believe that we can do better than that, and that's why we're proposing that this budget take a simple step towards fairness, with a modest tax increase on people making more than \$500,000 a year. Most people actually agree that if you earn more in a year than most people earn in a decade, you can afford to pay a little bit more, especially if that helps people who are struggling to keep up on disability support, for example, or the working mom who needs a child care space, or families stuck waiting in waiting rooms or struggling to pay their heating bill. We think that people who make half a million dollars a year can afford to pay a little more, and people who make less need a bit of a break. That's a debate that this province desperately needs, and it's a debate that we have to have. Are we protecting tax rates for millionaires or working parents who need daycares? We think that it's a simple step to improve this budget and build a better Ontario by changing our priorities.

A better Ontario would have a stronger health care system. Fifty years ago, Tommy Douglas and the pioneers of medicare dreamed of a medical system where people didn't just receive treatments when they were ill, but they received support so that they wouldn't even fall ill in the first place. When we fast-forward to today, we see that the quality of people's health still depends on the size of their wallet.

For over a decade, we've been promised the revolution in long-term care and home care that Roy Romanow mapped out in his groundbreaking report. Instead, what do we have? Instead, we have mostly a private system where millions—I'd actually hazard a guess billions—are being pulled out for profit every year, and people providing front-line care are often living below the poverty line.

One personal support worker told me a story of her own situation. She told me that she, as a personal support

worker, intended on quitting that job so she could work part-time at Tim Hortons, because she would be making more money working part-time at Tim Hortons than she earned working 10 hours a day in the home care sector. There's something wrong with that picture, Speaker.

It's no surprise that our senior citizens in this province are stuck in hospital rooms, unable to get out. Sadly, a public health care system that should be focused on providing reliable and affordable care is leaving patients feeling squeezed and with no options. That's all the more frustrating when we see that the money being poured into this system is diverted to private profits and massive paycheques of the CEOs at the top.

The proposed budget will lead to hospital closures in communities across Ontario. This is something we're very, very concerned about. The fact is, closing local hospitals will mean that people who need critical care are going to end up travelling farther and farther to get it. Instead of being closer to critical care, these people are going to be farther away. Patients and their families have made it clear that this is not where we should start cutting in Ontario. The scandal at Ornge has taught us that there are too many people who see our health care system as a way to make money instead of a way to help people.

New Democrats think that we can do better.

Ontarians told us that they were tired of executive salaries in the public sector shooting through the roof. So we're proposing a cap on CEO salaries, effective immediately. All new executive hires should see their salaries capped at twice the pay of the Premier.

Ontarians told us that they want health care to be stable and they want it to be there for them when they need it. So we're proposing to invest the savings from capping CEO salaries and revenue from a modest tax for the super-wealthy into local hospitals.

Ontarians said that they were also disgusted by scandal after scandal after scandal in this government. So we're proposing stronger whistle-blower protection so that it extends to things like Ornge and eHealth, so that workers can speak up and tip off the Ombudsman so that he can investigate when these things are happening. This is a debate that this province desperately needs to have. Are investments helping the patient in the waiting room or the CEO in the boardroom? We think it's very, very clear that it's time to put in some simple steps that help patients and their families, not CEOs in the backrooms.

We also have some simple proposals to create and protect jobs in this province. It was amazing to most of us when we saw the budget and didn't see any focus whatsoever on job creation. So we have some proposals in that regard.

Since the recession, the governments in Ottawa and Queen's Park have been offering the same old, tired solution: more corporate tax giveaways. They say that if we cut taxes for business, business is going to create jobs. Well, they're wrong, and it's obvious that they're wrong. Businesses might create jobs. They might cut jobs. They can do whatever they want with the money that we've handed them because there are no strings

attached, and any CEO is going to tell you that if they don't have an incentive to create jobs, they're certainly not going to do it out of the goodness of their hearts. That's why we need to work with businesses to create jobs, not simply hand blank cheques to companies to do with as they please. That's why we need to reward the companies that are willing to make job-creating investments here in Ontario instead of protecting those that take jobs and resources out of the province. That's why we need affordable, reliable services and infrastructure, because if we're going to build an economy that works, companies will need affordable electricity; they'll need reliable health care and good schools and training programs.

The proposed budget takes some very, very small steps towards these goals. The government has finally stopped their reckless strategy of year-after-year corporate tax giveaways, and they've proposed a jobs and prosperity fund which could be used to make smart investments, but we have to make sure that that fund is not just another source of unaccountable giveaways.

1600

This is what this government has favoured for a long time—not only no-strings-attached tax cuts but no-strings-attached giveaways. If the jobs and prosperity fund is only going to be used for more of the same, dispatching of these giveaways without any consideration for creating good jobs or building our economy, then it will be a useless fund. If we're going to be serious about getting Ontario going, we need to do much, much better than what this government has proposed.

People have told us they want to reward job creators. They think that's a really good idea. That's why we proposed a job creator tax credit, to ensure that government money goes to the companies that are actually creating new jobs and not the ones that simply ship jobs away.

People also told us that electricity costs are too high. They know they're too high on their own household bills, but they also know that those high costs are causing a problem in terms of our ability to create jobs and create new investment in Ontario. That's why we had proposed that the review of the electricity sector in this province take place. But we also want to make sure that that review looks at real change in a sector that's become an alphabet soup of agencies and a toxic mix of private power deals.

Today the government made an announcement, and they're very proud of it—the measures are long overdue. An acknowledgement is needed of the announcement that was made today. But the commitment to keeping an electricity system market that just doesn't work and the private power deals that go with it shows that we have a heck of a long way to go when it comes to making sure that this government does the right thing by the electricity sector.

If we're going to get electricity prices under control, we can't stick with that confusing status quo that leaves rates rising every single year. New Democrats believe



that it is time for affordable, reliable public power in the province of Ontario.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** God, even Al Spacek agrees with that.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Al Spacek was the Conservative who ran against you in the election.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** And he agrees with that.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** You talk to any northerner and they'll agree with it, particularly where they are able to produce the cleanest power we possibly have at the very lowest prices. And yet, companies, forestry industry companies, mills and those kinds of industries are moving out of the north. Well, they've been moving out of the north for almost a decade now. Why? Because even though they generate power at very, very low prices, you can't simply use that power at the low price. The Ontario-wide price is used, and it's not competitive with a forestry industry that's operating in our two adjacent provinces and others as well. Manitoba and Quebec are selling power at half or less than what Ontario sells power for. So it's very uncompetitive for wood processors and mills to operate in this province.

Anyway, people have told us also, particularly people from the north—but it's interesting, because when we talk to folks, it's not only northerners who believe this, but in fact people from all across Ontario believe that shipping raw resources away hurts our province and kills good jobs, and yet that's another path that this province has been on for far too long. That's why we propose to make it the law that resources aren't shipped away if they can be processed right here in Ontario by Ontario workers.

Speaker, that's another debate that this province needs to have. Are we going to work with companies that create jobs, or are we going to hand billions and billions of dollars to companies that simply ship jobs away? Are we going to allow our natural resources to be pulled out of the ground and shipped somewhere else for processing, or are we going to make sure that we're putting Ontario people back to work by making sure those resources are processed right here in Ontario?

These ideas are designed to provoke some discussion, and the ideas that we put on the table in engaging the government in a conversation about their unfair budget were designed to provoke a discussion, and I have to say, the discussion is one that's ongoing. It's a very, very serious discussion, because the government put together a budget without any real input from ourselves or the other opposition party, and that is very disappointing, when a minority government is elected and they don't open the doors to communication with the other two political parties. It smacks of an arrogance that's more akin to a majority government. Okay, granted that's what they were used to—they had two majorities—but the people told them quite clearly that they didn't want them to have a majority government anymore. They wanted to curb that Liberal arrogance. They wanted to reduce that "my way or the highway" approach that they had watched for eight years as the government continued to

undertake initiatives that people weren't happy with, but the government simply ignored them.

In October, the people of this province said, "No more 'my way or the highway.' We want politics to be done differently in Ontario. We want the political parties to work together to make Ontario a better place for all Ontarians."

Now, I don't think the government quite understood that those were the marching orders that we were given. We understood it very clearly, and that's why, from day one, we started rolling up our sleeves, and that's why, from day one, I personally made an effort to connect with both the Liberals and the Conservatives about how we move forward in this minority situation.

Of course, not much was done in those early days. In those first couple of weeks last year when we sat here, there wasn't very much done at all in terms of taking us up on the offer of working together. And then, of course, the government decided to put together a budget. Not only did they not consult with us over their budget; they didn't even consult with the people of Ontario over their budget. We didn't even have public hearings on the budget this time around, which is really a shameful and pitiful thing. The people of Ontario deserve much, much better than that.

So what we did when we saw the result of the government's singular and cocooned way of doing things, we decided that we needed to take that result out to the public and get a sense of what they felt, and as I said at the beginning of my speech, people very clearly felt that this budget came up short and missed the mark in a number of areas. Overall, it wasn't balanced. Overall, it asked everyday families once again to feel the pain, to take the hit, while others were not asked to do the same.

It completely missed the mark on job creation, one of the biggest issues that people are concerned about. There's no jobs plan. In fact, I was quite worried about that, because the government's own guru, Mr. Don Drummond, was quite clear that that's something that the government shouldn't do—that they shouldn't bother with job creation; they should focus elsewhere with cuts. I thought that was the wrong thing to do, and then I found that in fact the government decided to take his advice.

The comments that we put forward to the government were ones that were designed to provoke a good discussion, and I have to say that I look forward to the debate in the coming days, not only here in the chamber, but I look forward to the discussion that's happening around the table with the government. And I urge all of us, everyone in this room, to put aside the arrogance, to stop the chest-thumping, the "my way or the highway" attitude, and to work on solutions that work for the people who sent us here. After all, they should be our most important light as we seek some finality in this budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the time that you've given me to speak on this budget motion.

I appreciate the speech made by the leader of the third party, and I appreciate the sentiment she presented, that it is a time that we all work together. It is necessary that we all come together as members of this Legislature to ensure that we find and develop a budget which, at the end of the day, helps Ontarians, helps grow our economy and of course helps eliminate the deficit as well. That is the nature of the minority government, and our government, of course, will continue to work.

1610

It's unfortunate to see that the official opposition decided not to be part of that conversation and pulled itself out of that debate right from the beginning, which was not helpful to the conversation. At least we are in conversations with the New Democratic Party and looking at ideas which, at the end of the day, I'm sure will result in a better document that is going to help all Ontarians.

This is an important budget, Speaker. All budgets are important, but I think in the time and the place that we're standing right now, in terms of our economy in Ontario, in terms of the economy of Canada and the global instability that exists in the economic prospect, it is an important budget because it's a budget that sets a direction for the future. It's a budget that ensures that we have financial, fiscal and economic sustainability in our province and that allows us, of course, to strengthen public services that are extremely important to Ontarians, to our community, especially those who are vulnerable in our community.

This budget takes strong action for Ontario. The aim is to ensure that we have a plan in place that will ensure that we are growing as a province. So we are making choices. We're making the right choices as we work on this budget, choices which, at the end of the day, are fair, responsible and balanced, because that's the nature of the plan that is presented.

Now, what does this budget do? I think if you really distill it down, this budget focuses on three things. One is to present a balanced budget, to present a deficit-elimination plan that will ensure that over the next five years we are able to eliminate the deficit that currently exists, \$15.3 billion. That is a very big aspect of this budget. In order for us to grow our economy, in order to ensure that we have a strong, sustainable foundation to the future of our province, we must eliminate the deficit. That is a key focus of this particular budget. What it does is it presents a five-year plan to eliminate the deficit, taking it from \$15.3 billion, where it stands right now, to zero by 2017-18.

We have spoken a lot as to where the deficit came from, and I think we have established in the debate that is taking place that we have gone through quite a tumultuous period in our economy. The recession, commonly known now as the great recession, that hit the globe, essentially—all major economies around the world—starting in 2008 and 2009, had a devastating impact not only on Ontario but other provinces and Canada as well. And there was a concerted effort that was made by all

governments. There was a general consensus that was made at the international level that we need to fight the recession in 2009 by stimulating the economy, by making sure that we are making investments in our infrastructure, that we are making investments in our communities so that we can create jobs and fight the recession.

As a result, of course, Canada was part and parcel of that conversation, that the government of Canada and other provinces, including Ontario, even borrowed money to help save our economy. We saw the federal government going into a massive deficit. As a result, their spending went up about 65%, and so did Ontario's. In fact, Ontario and Canada worked together, hand in hand, be it bailing out companies like General Motors and Chrysler and protecting 400,000 jobs in Ontario, or investing in roads and bridges and community centres and recreation centres in our communities.

I think every single riding got to work on projects that were very much needed, that happened as a result of the contribution that was made by both the federal government, which is of a different political stripe, a Conservative government, and the provincial government here in Ontario, which is of a Liberal stripe. The idea was to ensure that we help build our economy. That's why both levels of government in other provinces as well had to borrow money, hence the deficit.

So now, we have been able to shore up our economy. We have been able to ensure that we have come out of the worst part of the recession. We're starting to create jobs and recover a lot of those positions, and now is the time that we start a plan to pay off that deficit. A big aspect of this particular budget is a balanced budget: a deficit elimination plan over the next five years, which is outlined in quite a bit of detail.

The second aspect of the purpose behind this budget is to create jobs. We need to make sure that our economy is strong. We need to make sure that we are able to bring down the unemployment rate, that we are able to create jobs in our economy. Especially after the recession, where so many were laid off, we have to ensure that we are creating jobs, and there are steps that are outlined in this budget that ensure that. We have our green energy strategy, which we are continuing, that is on track to create 50,000 jobs in our economy. We are also creating a jobs and prosperity council through this budget, and a jobs and prosperity fund that will focus on supporting productivity and job creation.

In addition to that, we are focusing on regional economies. I think that's very important. We have the northern Ontario heritage fund, which will continue to build on the success of supporting 4,400 projects already, leveraging \$2.4 billion in additional contributions to the northern economy and creating or sustaining 17,800 direct jobs in the north. The proposed extension of the eastern Ontario development fund has also benefitted over 100 businesses and regional projects in eastern Ontario. It leveraged about \$488 million of additional investment and created 1,900 direct jobs since 2008. The other thing we're doing, Speaker, as you may know, is



that we have proposed a new southwestern Ontario development fund, very similar to the eastern Ontario development fund, which would help communities attract new investment and create jobs in southwest Ontario.

All these activities are very specific, and they're part of this budget, to ensure that we are creating jobs, which is very important.

We've already seen that all the actions the McGuinty government has taken have resulted in the unemployment rate declining from a recessionary high of 9.4% to 7.6% now. We just recently had the job numbers for March, and we saw that just in Ontario alone, 40,000 new jobs were created. That was more than half of the overall Canadian share. More than half of the new jobs that were created in the month of March were in the province of—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** We've got a couple of loud sidebars going on. If you'd like to go outside, I'd appreciate it. I'm trying to listen to the speaker. Thank you.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you, Speaker. I was talking about the jobs that were created in March alone, and that was 40,000. In excess of 50% of the new jobs that were created in March in all of Canada were taking place in Ontario.

Essentially, what we are looking at is that in 2011, more than 121,000 jobs were created in Ontario, virtually all of them full-time. That's very significant and really speaks to the policies we have put in place. As we are rebuilding our economy, as the economy is recovering, we are starting to see these jobs being created, and they are being created across the province. Of course, more needs to be done, no ifs, ands or buts about it, because there is still an unemployment rate, and we need to make sure we continue to reduce that. But we're going in the right direction.

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The third aspect of this budget that I want to talk about—the leader of the third party spoke about it as well—which I think is extremely important, because this is what our communities and neighbours and members of our families and friends rely on, is to protect the gains we have made in health care and education. Health care and education are two of the largest responsibilities of the provincial government. These are two of the most important services that people rely on and expect from provincial government. Between health care and education, if you look at total program spending, the percentage of money that is being spent by the government through the authority of this Legislature, we're looking at roughly about 65% to 75%. Health, obviously, is the biggest chunk at over 40%, and then roughly close to 25% is investments in education. So these are very important services. These are very important investments that we make in our communities, and we need to make sure that we protect the gains that we've made in health care and education and, of course, we build on it.

In a nutshell, one of the things we are doing, for example, in this budget in health care is taking very

important steps in transforming health care, in making sure that our health care continues to get better. We already do have the shortest wait times in Ontario when compared to all other provinces in Canada. That's as a result of the investments the government has been making over the last eight years. But we of course have to do more. Most recently, the Minister of Health issued Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care to create a sustainable and high-quality health care system. There are a few things that the minister has undertaken, which are outlined and funded for within the budget; for example, transforming health care to reduce the rate of growth of spending to an average of 2.1% annually over the next three years. Of course, we have to take those steps as part of deficit elimination.

Most importantly, through the action plan, what the government is doing is enhancing community-based care to treat patients in alternative settings such as non-profit clinics and at home instead of in hospitals, where appropriate. I think people have all these examples in all our communities. When you speak to the seniors in our communities, when you speak to those who may have certain disabilities, and you ask them, "Where would you like to get care?", especially for chronic conditions, they will always tell you that they would like to get it right in their community, as close to their homes as possible. If they can get the care, as a senior, at home, that is the best place for them to get it. That's the kind of thing we need to do. Through the action plan, what the government and Minister of Health are suggesting is that we move a lot of those health care services to the community level where people live.

I had the great benefit to sit on the Centretown community health centre board, where I saw first-hand the great care that is provided to members of my community, because it's done right at the community level. It's done right where people live. It gives you the opportunity to tailor the service to better provide the full range of services that are needed when a patient requires them, as opposed to just going to the hospital, which is a bigger setting. It has its place, of course, in the health care system, but when it comes to chronic conditions, when it comes to care for seniors, the best place is the community and, even better, home.

There is a lot of work going on to ensure that we have more health care and more health care providers, like personal support workers, who do the good work of providing that to seniors at home—that we've got services available within the community setting from non-profit providers.

A very good example, something that I think the community has been asking for some time, is the creation of birthing centres. The minister recently announced that she will be helping to fund two birthing centres in the province. I'm really hopeful that one of them is going to be in my community in Ottawa—hopefully, specifically in Ottawa Centre, because we've got a lot of good midwives who are interested in creating that particular centre. But here's a great example of providing a service

which doesn't need to be, especially in non-complicated, non-risky type of birth situations, in a hospital setting, which is far more expensive—to be provided in a community setting through birthing centres. So I'm looking forward to the evolution of that particular initiative and how it's going to work out. Again, I hope one of those centres is located in my community in Ottawa.

The other big aspect is moving to patient-centred funding models to improve the value and quality of care. I think the minister has spoken to a lot of that to ensure that we are providing not only care in the community setting, but that the funding is attached to the patient. So instead of going to institutions like large hospitals, no matter how many patients they see, the funding actually follows the patient so they can get the service, they can get the care they need. That allows for better modification, better tailoring of the services that that patient may need, especially with chronic care, and I think a better delivery of health care. So that work is spoken of and is allowed for in this particular budget.

Let's talk about another very important issue, which is education. Speaker, as you know, our government has been very much focused on improving education, making extensive investments in our schools, our kindergartens, our elementary and secondary schools, our post-secondary education, like universities and colleges. I see the schools in my community. I see the colleges and universities in Ottawa. They're all thriving. Graduation rates are going up. Class sizes are down. These are incredible things that we have done in our education system, and the result is that we rank in the top five in the world.

I had a great experience the other day looking at the New York Times. There was a full-page ad talking about, "Why is the United States of America in 17th place under the international education ranking and how are we going to solve that problem?" I was so happy to see—and the graphic was interesting because they used the maps of those particular countries which ranked in the top 20, and here was Canada. Actually, we know, looking at the studies, that Ontario's right there in the top five. That's the company we sit in right now because of the investments we've been able to make in the education system over the last eight years.

Our government is very much committed to continuing with those investments, because I can tell you, Speaker—and we all recall—that eight years ago we were not ranked in the top five in the world. In fact, eight years ago we had some significant challenges in our education system in terms of the confidence of our teachers, in terms of their ability to give a good education, which they are trained so well for.

There are some very specific choices we're making in this budget, choices that are important to our families, choices that are important to the future well-being of our province. What are those choices?

We are continuing with the full implementation of the full-day kindergarten program by September 2014. Everywhere I go and speak to young parents in my community, they want the full-day kindergarten program

to continue. It's a good program, and we have already seen some good pedagogical results coming out that show that kids who are in full-day kindergarten programs do far better than those who are in half-day programs.

We're keeping the cap on class sizes in the early grades.

We remain committed to the 30% off Ontario tuition grants for eligible undergraduate university and college students.

Also through this budget, we are further integrating training programs across government to make them more responsive to today's job market.

All these steps will result in the world's best-educated workforce to ensure future prosperity in the knowledge-based economy that we live in.

At the end of the day, Speaker, I'll come to the theme that I started with, and that's the prism or the spectrum we need to look at, and that is what kind of economy we're building. We live in a globalized world. We do not just compete with the remaining nine provinces in the country or just with the United States or Mexico in North America. We actually compete at a global level with Europeans, Asians, Africans and South Americans, and we need to make sure that we are creating a workforce right here in this province that can do so. It's not just about today. It is about the future, and that is why the passage of this budget is that much more important. We need to reduce. We need to eliminate our deficit. We need to make sure that we're creating a sustainable economy and protecting the gains in health care and education. I hope all members will support this budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** In response to the infomercial from the member from Ottawa Centre—and we know it was an infomercial. For 20 minutes he spoke about the budget but not once did we hear a figure or a fact. All we heard were platitudes and rhetoric from—I guess we should call him "Yasir in Wonderland" instead of the member from Ottawa Centre, I believe.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member knows we don't say things like that. Withdraw.

1630

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I withdraw.

But, Speaker, 20 minutes of a budget debate and not once did he mention a fact or figure in it. He didn't mention that our deficit now is three times greater than all other provinces combined. He didn't mention that, even though we're in this austerity budget, they're spending \$2 billion more this year than last year. He didn't bother mentioning that the deficit will actually increase by \$100 million over last year to this year. Those are important facts and figures for the people of Ontario to hear, to understand, and to know that what is being said by this Liberal government is a total falsehood. It's inappropriate that this budget comes out and the debate that is used is an infomercial by the member from Ottawa Centre.

Let's get to the facts—



**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Minister?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think that there was unparliamentary language in that last little gambit. I just ask you to rule on that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I believe that he was on the borderline. If he had used the word that starts with "L," I might have had a problem. It's close. He's on the borderline. Thank you.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Do we get to reset the clock from those inappropriate interjections?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Continue.

Questions and comments? The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm coming to worry a little bit about you. You don't seem to be looking down my way too often, but, you know, you did it, so I'll be thankful for that.

It was rather interesting to listen to the member talk about the budget. He certainly left out some big parts of what's also in the budget. But even what he did talk about, when he talked about transferring some services into the community—the province of Ontario is a wide province. If you look at the areas that I represent, if you look at the northeast, we have 34 small, rural northern hospitals. They're in the northeast. When you look at their needs, they are not there, you know? To think that a small, rural hospital will do just fine with a 0% increase is ludicrous, Mr. Speaker. It just can't work.

When I hear him talk about, "We will shift services that are presently inside of our hospitals out into the community," well, that could work in a big centre like Ottawa, but you know what, Mr. Speaker? We're here to represent the entire province of Ontario, and we don't all live in Ottawa or Toronto. We live everywhere in Ontario, and in many, many of those places, this makes no sense.

For the small and rural hospital, they are it. Right now, the way we are treating them, they're at risk of self-imploding. Less and less services are available to them. We're not getting services that are closer to home. We're creating those big centres in big areas and asking everybody in northern and rural Ontario to travel to those big centres. This is a step backward, not a step forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you, and I would just like to remind the member from Nickel Belt that I did look her way for petitions. Methinks thou protest too much.

The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, thank you very much. I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes to respond to the comments of the member from Ottawa Centre. I look forward in about 45 minutes from now, about 5:15, to having an opportunity of about 20 minutes to speak on the budget motion that's before us today.

What hasn't been spoken about—and I have a lot that I'm looking forward to saying in about 45 minutes. But what hasn't been spoken about today, I think, is a lot of

the things that will be placed at risk that our budget that we tabled here on March 27 has to a large degree protected, those being the gains and the investments that we have made as a Liberal government over the course of the last eight, going on nine, years.

Now, I would understand why the opposition parties, the Conservatives and the NDP, would not want to speak to that. But I would say, quite frankly, to the people of my riding in Thunder Bay–Atikokan and to the people of Ontario, that should we go to the polls next week, and we'll know that in a very few short days, there is a great deal of gain and success that we have already made in this province that will be placed at risk. The member from Ottawa Centre spoke to some of that when he spoke briefly. Twenty minutes goes by in a hurry, but he has spoken very clearly about some of the gains that we have made in health care and in education.

We all know in this province that when you poll the people of Ontario, they will tell you that their first two priorities are almost always health care and education—the economy from time to time finds its way into the top two or three, when you poll them, when it comes to their priorities. So far, in this budget we have protected incredible gains that we have made in those two policy areas. When I speak in about 40 minutes, I'll speak in more detail about what some of those gains are.

I do want to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for highlighting those two pieces as well as the other things that he touched on.

We'll know, Speaker, as I said, in a very few short days if the Conservatives and the NDP will decide to force an election on the people of the province of Ontario at a cost of about \$100 million, putting at risk many of those gains.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What the Liberals will talk about is fictitious game playing with numbers, that is not backed by factual evidence at all. When you talk to people in the province and ask them if they feel better off, the answer is no.

One number that is not debatable is that when Dalton McGuinty became Premier, until 2014—the estimate is 2014, if these people carry on. By 2014, he will have doubled the debt of this province in those few short years. That's not a debatable point. The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan may want to try, when he gets to speak—but that's not a debatable point.

Why can't we support this budget, Mr. Speaker? It does nothing to address the financial crisis that Dalton McGuinty and his gang have put this province in. In fact, when the people were ready for a truly austere budget, spending is actually up in this budget. Shame on this gang for actually raising spending in a budget that was supposed to be a budget based on austerity. The deficit for next year is down about 1% from this year, but spending is actually up. The debt continues to rise. So when they talk about balancing this budget by 2017-18,

at the present rate it would take them 100 years to balance this budget at 1% reduction in the deficit a year.

You cannot believe a word these people say. They're talking about \$17 billion in savings in this document. Well, that's like if you go into the store planning to spend \$1,000 and you only spend \$500. Because things changed, you walk out and say, "I saved \$500"? No, you still spent \$500. They don't seem to understand, but the people in Ontario understand.

They've played all kind of games with numbers, but theadavidw reality is, spending is up, the deficit is up, there's no credible jobs plan, and there's no credible job to get Ontario out of this fiscal crisis that McGuinty and his gang have created.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Ottawa Centre has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thanks to the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, the member from Nickel Belt, the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan and the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for listening to my comments and providing some commentary on them.

This is an important budget, Speaker. There's a lot in this budget, and it is very difficult to get through it in 20 minutes. The essence of the budget is that we are working hard to ensure that we find a way to grow and strengthen our economy, to ensure that we eliminate the deficit over the next five years and we do so in a manner that is not on the backs of the people who need services like health care and education.

If my friends in the Conservative Party have their way, they will be back to the Mike Harris days of slash and burn. We know, Mr. Speaker, those ways were rejected long ago. It's really easy—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** All right. I think we've got a little bit of overpowering comments coming here.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I didn't realize you were standing; I apologize.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Yes, you ignored me when I was standing up.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I apologize.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I accept your apology. I would suggest we tone it down a bit because the Speaker does not want to name someone. Thank you.

Further debate.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** There's been a fair amount of rhetoric on this budget, outside of the scope of what the budget itself represents. I think we've said a lot about why our party has taken a position of voting no on this budget and being unshakable on that.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** You haven't read it.

1640

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I just heard somebody say, "You haven't read it," and I heard Minister Wynne a couple of minutes ago say that we haven't read it. Let me correct a number of things, and I want to correct these

things so that they get on the record, and this is the unvarnished truth.

I walked into the budget lock-up myself with my leader, Tim Hudak, on budget day. We had had about three hours of study by approximately 20 of our people. They divided the thing up by chapter, as is usually done, made the appropriate notes, prepared briefing materials for us. We spent about three hours being thoroughly briefed on the budget, and it didn't meet any of the exigencies that we had set out to support the budget, so we took a position at that point. We made it firm in the media scrum, in the budget lock-up, that we weren't going to vote for it, that we were all going to be here, that there wasn't going to be any 24-hour flu. It's got nothing to do with not reading the budget. We've read it probably more thoroughly than most of the people on the other side, so we stand by that position.

I also want to get into the Hansard the issue of what we've been putting up with in this House, frankly, for the last three weeks, which is an exercise on the part of the Liberal government in what I would call election branding. This has not been, particularly in question period, an issue of whether or not we're going to vote for the budget, why there may or may not have been collaboration, and I'll get to that. This has been an exercise on the part of Premier McGuinty and Minister Duncan particularly on the issue of whether or not our position is meant to evoke an election. I can say categorically, for the people who are watching us at home, for the media who are listening, and for the Liberals who care to pay attention: The last thing that we want is an election.

We think, potentially if there's an election coming next week, it will be because you don't want to listen to what the third party has to say. They feel willing to engage, and, frankly, we do not—and we do not for a very good reason. During the fall period, after October 6, when we had an election that resulted in a minority government in this province, there was a period during which time we saw what seemed to be a more collaborative approach on the part of the ministerial people on that side, where if something happened in labour, my office might get a call from Minister Jeffrey, and it seemed fine. We indicated and our leader indicated that we were willing to work together and collaborate.

I didn't get any call from my opposite number, the Minister of Finance. I'm the finance critic. Oh, I called his office. I had my executive assistant call his office, probably within two or three weeks of the election, and ask for a meeting. The Minister of Finance had his people call back and say, "Why does Mr. Shurman want a meeting?" The explanation was simple: "Want to get to know the minister better, want to develop a working relationship, want to talk about what we might be able to do, now that there's this new spirit of collaboration." It took a while, but I believe that it was in November we had our first meeting. His parliamentary assistant, the member from Ottawa Centre, knows very well, because he attended that meeting and I attended that meeting.

The reason I'm talking about it today and putting it into the Hansard record is because the first phrase out of



Minister Duncan's mouth that day, as we sat in his boardroom at the building that houses the Ministry of Finance, was, "Ground rules. Ground rules are, we're going to have this meeting but it's off the record. We're not going to go out and we're not going to talk about it. Is that clear?" I readily agreed and, frankly, until today, kept with that agreement. That was the first meeting that we had, and I say again, at my behest, not at the minister's.

So we had a discussion. We talked about some ideas that our party had put out there, both during and after the election. They were rejected out of hand. We talked about the wage freeze, for example, and heard a fair amount about British Columbia's Supreme Court ruling and so forth.

Time marched on, as it always does. As we got closer to budget time—and now I'll put it at February—we were contacted by the Minister of Finance's department again, asking for another meeting. By the time that meeting was held—and he was holding meetings simultaneously with myself and with my opposite number in the NDP—it was mid-February. Now, I find it more than strange that we should be talking about what we might or might not want to collaborate on from a budget perspective in mid-February, when we know we're going to have a budget tabled in the third or fourth week of March, because by the time you get to mid-February, most of that budget is put to bed. You're almost to the point where you're going to translation and to print. So there's no way that there was any real wish to collaborate. Our conclusion was, they're going to do what they want to do.

There was a third meeting called by me and that was at the end of February. There was no urgency on the part of Minister Duncan to do anything before that. I said to him categorically, "Minister, I don't think that we can really collaborate at this point. You're going to print, and it's your show. You want this budget. Put it on the table. We'll debate it. We'll discuss it, and we'll vote on it."

That's the unvarnished truth. That's what I wanted to get on the record.

So the minister, who set the ground rules about not talking outside of meetings, then proceeded to go to the media at every opportunity and say he'd been meeting with the finance critic of the Progressive Conservative Party, the critic of the NDP. Indeed he had, but he didn't talk with all candour about what had transpired in those meetings, and frankly, I don't believe that those meetings were meant to really evoke anything from us.

So now, in a last-ditch attempt, there are apparently some kind of secret talks going on between those two parties, and we'll see what happens next week. But I've got to say, for all who are listening, whether you're media, whether you're watching me on television at home or in your offices, whether you're a Liberal sitting on the other side of this House, if there is an election next week because that budget is defeated, it's not because any Progressive Conservative, from Tim Hudak right through 37 people in this caucus—not because any one of us ever wanted to evoke it.

Our position on the budget is founded entirely on principle, and our principles are very clear. We have said before the election, during the election, since the election—in fact, I'll take it back almost three years to the election of our leader, Tim Hudak. In his acceptance speech at that leadership convention, he talked about the fact that we needed a solid path to creating jobs in the province of Ontario, we had to cut spending in the province of Ontario, and those are the two tenets that we live by as Progressive Conservatives. Whether Liberals or NDP like those things or not, that's what we're about. We don't see any sign of that in this budget, and that and that alone, Speaker, is our reason for taking the position that we've taken of voting absolutely no.

The last comment that I want to make before I actually get to the notes on the budget speech is about this concept that was advanced by Premier McGuinty, whether it was yesterday or the day before I can't recall, during question period, about the fact that because we have not collaborated—as far as he's concerned, we haven't collaborated—we have therefore forfeited our right to speak about this budget. That is patent nonsense.

We were elected—37 of us were elected—in duly conducted elections in the ridings that we represent to come to this place and represent the people of those ridings. That government, as a minority, has a duty—even if they weren't a minority, but they are—to listen to what we have to say because we speak for people. The NDP speaks for people.

As I've said in question period, contrary to the arrogance that is displayed on a constant basis by this Minister of Finance and by this Premier, they are not royalty. Premier McGuinty is not the king of Ontario. And contrary to what the Minister of Finance may think, he's more like the court jester than he is like any kind of prince.

So I don't want to hear—

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order, the member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Mr. Speaker, with great respect, I think the member is using remarks that are unparliamentary, calling the finance minister a court jester.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the member from Thornhill to remove the one word, in particular.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** So I'll finish up that aspect of this one-way conversation in response to the conversation that's been coming from that side by saying, contrary to what they say, we stand for Ontario every bit as much as they do.

When there's a suggestion from the other side that we've somehow forfeited our right to speak on this budget, when there's a suggestion from the other side to the effect that somehow or other we, because we don't support that budget, are not for Ontario, that we don't

stand up for Ontario, that, too, Speaker, is absolutely nonsensical. We represent Ontarians every bit as much as any Liberal member represents Ontarians, and the sooner they understand that respect is a mutual thing, and the sooner they understand that collaboration is an act of many, not an act of the few, the sooner we'll get along in this House.

1650

Now, I'll get to a few of these notes that my staff have duly prepared because I want to speak a little bit about Ontario. I want to speak about Ontario because it's the essence of why we all come to this place and why we do what we do every day in the Legislative Assembly.

This is a province that has, in days past, led Canada economically—40% of the population and, as too many people have said, but it's true, the engine of Canada. We were a centre of industry. We were the hub of innovation and, most significantly, a place where entrepreneurs from all over the world sought to establish their new ventures and grow new businesses and contribute to the prosperity that we enjoyed, and it's a place where Ontarians with Canadian roots dating back so many hundreds of years worked side by side with new Canadians who chose this province as the place to build new lives for their families.

I remember moving to my own riding of Thornhill back in 1983 with my family from Montreal. I remember the enthusiasm of knowing that there were countless opportunities for success here in Ontario, and later, when I moved from the corporate sector, I took advantage of those opportunities to set up small businesses of my own. Ontario was indeed a place of opportunity, where anyone willing to put in the hard work to do so could actually succeed. Like many Ontarians, I built a life in this province, and my wife and I look very much forward to our two sons doing the same.

So fast-forward now to the Ontario we have today, after eight years of Dalton McGuinty and the Dalton McGuinty government. Contrary to what they say, our potential indeed does remain great. Not even eight years of the McGuinty government could stifle that. I really detest the suggestion that we in the Progressive Conservative ranks, in the opposition ranks, feel at any time otherwise. We are so pro-Ontarian that we come here and we fight the good fight every single day in fact because we do feel that way.

Significant natural resources, the rule of law, a well-educated population, a diverse population—that, combined with the inherent entrepreneurial spirit of Ontarians, makes us a force to be potentially reckoned with globally and makes companies around the world take notice and consider Ontario.

Unfortunately, under Dalton McGuinty, far too often these companies that consider investing in Ontario make a decision against it. Why? Why do they do that? If you look at the budget that was presented just a few short weeks ago, it is all too clear. We live in a province of record debt and record deficit; a province that's on the watch list of institutions like Moody's; a province that is taxing its citizens at every possible turn without pro-

viding them the quality of services that that level of taxation should guarantee; a province that is spending more on paying the interest on its debt than it is on education; a province that is stifling business potential and growth with bureaucratic red tape; a province with a government that broke yet another commitment and backed down from reducing taxes so that companies could create good new jobs for Ontarians; and, most alarmingly, a province with a government that has shown absolutely no indication of changing its disastrous course.

There can be no doubt that, under the McGuinty government, the province has continued to slip, to fall further behind. All you have to do is look at 63 straight months of unemployment figures, showing us trailing every other province and territory in Canada.

The fundamentals that we have always been proud of as Ontarians are in jeopardy. The government is spending more on paying interest on the debt that they created than they are on education. Imagine that. In these circumstances, how much longer will we be able to sustain that education system? How long before we will no longer be able to say that we have the best-educated workforce? With a deficit of \$15.3 billion, up \$1.3 billion from just two years ago, how long can we maintain our health care system? With 600,000 people out of work, how can we talk about a future of prosperity? With a record debt and a deficit that is three times higher than those of all of Canada's other provinces combined, how can we move forward on providing the infrastructure that Ontario needs to drive its economy?

These numbers that we're talking about—deficit, interest, unemployment etc.—are not just numbers. They tell a story. They paint a picture, the picture of an Ontario that is bleak, that shouldn't be bleak, because—you're right and we're right—it's a great province that deserves our attention. That's what we need to do.

Those numbers do paint a fairly bleak picture of Ontario's current status, and they tell a story of a government, the McGuinty government, that has yet to come to terms with the fact that they are the problem. And as we've seen here over the past number of weeks, they're problems that are not entirely financial; they're problems of governance. I look, for example, at the fact that they, as a minority—or as they call it, a major minority—do not want to listen to the will of the House.

Speaker, I give you by way of example the majority of this House voting in favour of a select committee to look into the Ornge scandal and them not being willing to do so. For that reason, Speaker, I must move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Shurman has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will say "yea."

All those against will say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1656 to 1726.*



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Members, take your seats.

Mr. Shurman has moved adjournment of debate. All those in favour will please stand and be recorded by the clerks.

Those opposed, please stand.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 19; the nays are 36.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The motion is defeated.

Further debate? The member from Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I will continue with my remarks concerning the budget motion—speaking to the budget as I am, obviously out of synch with the Premier, who says that somehow or other this party has forfeited its right to debate, which I've discussed previously.

Look, governments are elected by the people. They're entrusted by the people with the responsibility to lead them through the good, the bad and the ugly. It was, and is, this government's responsibility to manage Ontario's finances through the global economic downturn, just as it is this government's responsibility to manage everything about the governance of Ontario. They have failed, and they have failed miserably, even while other jurisdictions succeeded—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Folks, it's a little loud in here, and we certainly have someone speaking. Just because the motion failed doesn't mean that everybody starts talking. A little silence, please.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Speaker, we've heard this Premier blame everything and everybody from Greece to China, from the high value of the dollar to what has gone on in the United States with their mortgage problems. I think he might have even blamed the weather once or twice. But what they've never done is review their own decisions, look inward and examine their own actions. They have never once taken their partisanship out of this picture.

Looking at this government's track record over the past eight years, in good times and in bad, one cannot help but think that in the Liberal version of the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, the answer to the question of the universe would be, "Spend," regardless of what the question actually is.

Fourteen out of 24 ministries—14 out of 24—will be spending more in this budget, despite the clear need for restraint. Two billion additional dollars in spending, \$600 million in additional interest, and this is supposed to be a strong budget of restraint. I don't think so.

Beyond that, they toss money away like so many pieces of used Kleenex.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** This will be the last warning to the government side. I've asked for quiet. Let's do it.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm just so disappointed in this government, the arrogant attitude of this government as evidenced by the fact that notwithstanding a majority vote in this House for a select committee to examine the goings-on at Ornge, another example of how the fiscal aspects of the province and the control aspects of the province have gotten away on them, they've said no. They stood fast on that, so for that reason I have to move adjournment of the House.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Before that, member from Thornhill, there's a point of order.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, I think the tone and the language were bordering on unparliamentary and inappropriate. I would really—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, I think my friend from Nipissing—Pembroke—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member will sit down now. Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Everyone will sit down. The member from Renfrew, we can do without those comments when I'm talking and I'm standing.

The member, I don't find it a point of order, but your point is well taken.

The member from Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'll simply re-move my motion, so I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Thornhill has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carries?

All in favour will say "aye."

Opposed?

The nays have it.

I believe we will call in the members and have another 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1732 to 1802.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Members, take your seats.

Mr. Shurman has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the clerks.

Opposed?

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 40; the nays are 3.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The motion carries. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House adjourned at 1803.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Samia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



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Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris  
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak  
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue  
Mario Sergio  
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Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton  
Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza  
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Soo Wong  
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Joe Dickson, Rosario Marchese  
David Orazietti, Laurie Scott  
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David Zimmer  
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Bill Mauro, Jim McDonell  
Phil McNeely, Randy Pettapiece  
Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor  
Lisa M. Thompson  
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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle  
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren  
Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan  
Shafiq Qaadri  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield  
Steve Clark, Garfield Dunlop  
Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod  
Jonah Schein  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett  
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof  
Michael Coteau, Grant Crack  
Vic Dhillon, Randy Hillier  
Rod Jackson, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh  
Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch











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First reading agreed to .....

Mr. Steve Clark .....

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First reading agreed to .....

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti .....

### Trust in Arbitration Act, 2012, Bill 70, Mr. Hillier /

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First reading agreed to .....

Mr. Randy Hillier .....

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### Environmental protection

Mr. John O'Toole .....

### Tourism

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Ms. Soo Wong .....

### Horse racing industry

Mr. Monte McNaughton .....

### Horse racing industry

Mr. Taras Natyshak .....

### Immigration policy / Politiques d'immigration

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First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 19 April 2012

Jeudi 19 avril 2012

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Let us pray.

*Prayers.*

## WEARING OF BADGES

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I seek unanimous consent to wear the "I Love Dance" logo today. It is a celebration of the Canadian Dance Assembly, as they kick off their year-long fundraising.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested unanimous consent to wear the badge. Agreed? Agreed.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 18, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** At the adjournment of the debate, Mr. O'Toole had just finished his comments, so we'll go to questions and comments. The member for Simcoe–Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I want to commend the member for Durham for his remarks and indicate that, really, we should be making a little more progress with respect to anti-bullying in this House, and it's unfortunate that things are a bit bogged down. We are moving forward with the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, Mrs. Witmer's bill, Bill 14, hopefully in committee soon. We should have been at the stage where Bill 13 and Bill 14, the government bill and the PC bill—a bill that Mrs. Witmer worked on for some three years now—were both at committee, and not have Bill 13 stuck at second reading because we want a select committee to delve into the Ornge matter.

We offered the government the opportunity to have both bills put into committee after first reading, Mr. Speaker, which is rarely done but can be done with consent of the House, and there would be a meshing or a

melding of the two bills and we would bring forward the best, most comprehensive anti-bullying legislation that I think this country has ever seen. There still is that opportunity. We believe that we can move forward, and we will eventually move forward, but the fact of the matter is, it's unfortunate that that wasn't done at this time.

Mrs. Witmer's bill has a clear definition of bullying, which we don't see in the government bill, Bill 13; early intervention—incorporation into the curriculum beginning in kindergarten so that students at all ages will learn that bullying is bad; a province-wide ministry model for prevention and intervention plans; the development of detailed school board prevention plans; and the reporting of incidents of bullying in schools, which is not in the government bill. So we should work together to try to merge the two bills and come up with one that's going to deal with this issue once and for all, hopefully.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to just rise to make comment on how important I think this bill is. I'm happy to hear the member opposite talk about working together, because I think what is really important is that we get this legislation passed so that we can have a framework, a legislative framework within which our schools can function.

Some years ago, we put in place an equity and inclusive education policy. What that did was reintroduce into our school system the notion that equity and the seeking of equity in an inclusive education environment in our schools was important because, in fact, for some years, previous to our coming to office, the word "equity" had been expunged from the education ministry. There was no policy or legislation that actually included the notion that equity was important. I think an inclusive classroom and an inclusive school system is what this Bill 13 is about.

On the issue of Bill 13 and Bill 14, Bill 14 having been brought forward by the member for—

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —Kitchener–Waterloo, and our Bill 13, which was brought forward by our Minister of Education, my understanding is that there is a lot of goodwill on this side of the House to merge these two bills, to take pieces of the opposition bill and put it into Bill 13 and to get the legislation passed. I think there's a bit of a disconnect between some of the language and rhetoric that's being used and what's actually happening on the ground. My hope is that the language and the rhetoric could come closer to the reality and we



could actually work together, get this legislation passed, because it is in the best interests of all our children in our schools that this legislation be in place and that anti-bullying for all be the norm.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'm happy to join in the debate on this important bill in terms of offering two minutes of comments.

Much has been made about the importance of the bill by all sides of the House. I, I think, as well as all of my colleagues, have been particularly disappointed that in terms of the level of debate on this bill that what we've heard from the official opposition has basically been the sound of bells ringing. We're now at over 11 hours that we've debated this bill, and for the most part all the opposition has done, instead of talking about it constructively, has been to ring bells.

It's not about me personally—the bells ring; we have a break here for 30 minutes as we wait for it—but it's the simple fact that what this bill is about is young people. It's about our education system. It's about educators. I've certainly been hearing from many individuals about how concerned they are that we're not making progress on this bill. I certainly acknowledge the good work that has been done by my neighbour to the north, our colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo, in terms of her bill, Bill 14. Certainly, the government has approached the opposition with the intention of seeing ways that we could reconcile both bills.

To that end, I think it's important to put on the record that the Minister of Education has written formally to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and made sure that the opposition is aware of our openness to amending the government bill to take what is best from both of them and combine it in the type of bill that could be dealt with by this Legislature. As the government House leader, I was disappointed that we couldn't get agreement moving forward of how we could pull the two together, despite a great deal of discussion. But that being said, we've always made known—and I just referenced the letter—that if we were to move G13 to committee, finally, if the opposition were to quit with the bell-ringing, we would be very open to having the types of discussions that would strengthen the bill.

0910

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, I'm looking forward to participating in the debate on this bill a little bit later—

**Hon. John Milloy:** We want to hear it, Frank.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Well, the government House leader will hear.

I think members of this House know that the issue of bullying is one that I've brought forward in this House on many occasions. It's a very serious one. I have dealt with constituents on many occasions. I know the effect that bullying has, not only on the victim of bullying but the victim's family as well, and I have repeatedly called in

the past on the Minister of Education and on the government to bring forward meaningful legislation that will make it very clear what the obligations are on the part of the teaching staff and on the part of the principals in our education system. I have called repeatedly for a recognition of the victims of bullying.

In the past, most of the focus has been on the bully and how does one deal with the bully. Who we tend to forget are the victims who struggle with the effects—the psychological effects—that bullying has had on them. I'm concerned about the bill before us, the government bill, because it does not address in a comprehensive way many of those aspects; I am pleased that my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo has brought forward a bill that does in a very comprehensive way. We look forward to seeing what kind of progress we can make to ensure that those essential parts of that member's bill are incorporated.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Durham has two minutes for a response.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you very much. I'm very impressed this morning that the Minister of Education, Ms. Broten, is here as well as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ms. Wynne. Both have spoken. I appreciate that, both having served as Minister of Education.

But more importantly, my remarks on Bill 13 were to stress the importance of and the balance that Mrs. Witmer, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo—in the time she spent on developing a full and comprehensive response to bullying.

In my remarks yesterday, I was just citing right from the paper that there were two incidents where cyber-bullying was cited as being provocative and current. That type of bullying has a very low profile in this overall discussion on Bills 13 and 14.

When you look at the strength of the Anti-Bullying Act—and I think the member from Simcoe–Grey paraphrased it very respectfully. It's a clear definition of bullying in Bill 14, which is lacking in Bill 13. These bills need to come together.

Now they're going to deflect all this and say that we're ringing bells procedurally. This is a democracy and the opposition are very concerned that the government's not listening, not just in the budget but they're not listening on the need for a select committee on the wasteful, scandalous spending of Ornge helicopter—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I request the member to keep the comments to the bill we're debating.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Well, I'm trying to explain. All due respect to you, Speaker, all deference to you, that is one of the reasons for the bells.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Don't argue with the Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** See? Now they're yelling. The Liberals are yelling at us now. I'm trying to speak in a civilized way. I feel like I'm being bullied.

So, respectfully, Mrs. Witmer has put on the table early intervention incorporated into the curriculum

beginning in kindergarten, a provincial-wide ministry model for prevention, a development of the detailed school board prevention plan, counselling services for the victims and the perpetrators, ongoing professional development, parent and community engagement and consultation, publicizing anti-bullying initiatives and policy, reporting incidents, prompt investigation. This is why we need to move forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Simcoe—Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back to our exchange off-camera there, the fact of the matter that we're here this morning again debating Bill 13 is a product of an inability of the parties to get together and merge these bills after first reading. We didn't have to have Bill 13 mired where it is in the second reading debate. If we had agreed to bring the bills together, in somewhat an unprecedented way, in the social policy committee, where Mrs. Witmer's bill is right now, the government at any time could have taken Bills 13 and 14 and put them in committee, and we would have merged the bills.

Unfortunately, if I recall back then, the government had some requests of what the framework of that discussion would be. Our belief very strongly on this side of the House in the PC caucus, and mine as House leader, is that we're not going to allow, in a minority government, ministers of the crown to dictate what the committees of this Legislature will or won't do. Therefore, we simply wanted the bills to come together, let the committee decide how they would merge those bills, and allow the committee to do its work in an independent way, without the influence of a minister of the crown sending a letter dictating how that committee would behave.

That sets a very bad precedent for other committees of this Legislature and a very bad precedent in a minority Parliament. The Liberals don't have a majority anymore and they have to stop behaving like they do. The fact of the matter is, this issue could have been resolved.

We're very, very positive about Mrs. Witmer's bill, the member for Kitchener—Waterloo, Bill 14. She spent three years developing the bill, travelling across the province, speaking with virtually every group and parents that had an interest in the issue—a lot of discussion, a lot of consultation.

The government has the option right now—Bill 14, Mrs. Witmer's anti-bullying bill, is in committee; it's before the social policy committee—to bring that forward for debate in committee and for clause-by-clause consideration and just simply pass Mrs. Witmer's bill.

It is a comprehensive bill and has far more features in it than the government's bill. It actually has a definition of bullying, which is a tricky thing to do, but it managed to create a definition with great buy-in from people across the province. It is a comprehensive way to protect children of every race, colour, creed, size, shape, whatever—it's very comprehensive—those who are subject to bullying.

It deals with the bullies themselves and requires them to go into—I'll say it in layman's terms—rehab and to

understand why bullying is wrong and to correct their ways.

Bill 14 is a comprehensive anti-bullying bill that focuses on prevention, accountability and awareness. Just reading from Mrs. Witmer's notes: "Bill 14 provides students, parents, educators and the community at large with a strategy to raise awareness and prevent bullying, as well as a process to resolve it...collect data and report" that data to the ministry, which is not contained in the Liberals' anti-bullying bill, Bill 13.

In fact, the Liberal bill does none of those things that I just mentioned. The Liberal bill does not address the root causes of bullying. We believe in tackling bullying head-on. Unlike the Liberal bill, the PC bill does so with four critical areas.

One is reporting of bullying and investigating root causes of bullying; accountability of school officials and boards to the ministry—that is, providing the data to the ministry and making sure that we can see this on a school-by-school basis and get to the root cause of it—education, a very important part of the member for Kitchener—Waterloo's bill, public awareness, a very important part of Bill 14—public awareness to prevent bullying—and the fourth area, which is not dealt with in the government's bill, is remedial education for bullies to teach them that bullying is unacceptable.

Mrs. Witmer's bill, the member for Kitchener—Waterloo, requires anti-bullying lessons to be incorporated in the provincial curriculum from junior kindergarten to grade 12, something that the Liberal bill does not do.

Mr. Speaker, again I say—it is unfortunate, but I want to explain to the public the reason that this bill is being brought forward again this morning. It's perhaps that it is stuck in second reading because we wanted a committee to deal with the issue of the Ornge ambulance scandal, which is by far the largest scandal in my 21 years here in the Legislature. And yet the government wants to hide that. Some unparliamentary terms I wouldn't be allowed to use, but they don't want to get to the bottom of it. They don't want to have an inquiry.

We're stuck in a committee that has procedural rules that are archaic and are not attuned to getting to the bottom of these issues. It will take years, at the rate we're going. I think my colleague Mr. Klees, the member for Newmarket—Aurora, has done an exemplary job on this issue in uncovering tens of millions of dollars—

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We're talking about Bill 13, and the member opposite is not talking about Bill 13. He's not even approaching the substance of the issue. I'd ask that he stick to the subject.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. I would ask the member to restrict his comments to Bill 13.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Fine. If the government doesn't want to hear the full story, then I move adjournment of



the debate, Mr. Speaker, because we need a select committee on Ornge.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour of adjournment, please say "aye."

Those against adjournment, please say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

Call in the members; a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 0921 to 0951.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Could all members take their seats, please?

Mr. Wilson has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

All those against, please stand.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 28; the nays are 33.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order. The motion is lost.

Mr. Wilson?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, it shows that one of these days, we're going to win one of these votes. Persistence will pay off. But again, we wouldn't have to be ringing the bells if the government would agree to abide by the will of this House, which on a couple of occasions has actually voted and passed that a select committee be struck or an inquiry be held into the multi-million dollar scandal—as I said, the largest scandal I've ever seen in my 21 years here. Yet the government doesn't want to get to the bottom of it and doesn't want to uncover the whole truth. We have to do that in a committee room under archaic rules where witnesses can only appear for a half-hour. Therefore, Bill 13 is caught up in some procedural wrangling, but the government knows where the escape route is and refuses to take it.

The fact of the matter is that Bill 13 shouldn't even be in second reading debate right now. It should be in committee, along with Bill 14, Mrs. Witmer's bill, the honourable member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who spent three years of her life painstakingly meeting with parents, consultants, children who have been bullied and bullies themselves, to come up with a very comprehensive piece of legislation that I believe this House, if given a fair chance, could vote upon and would pass, and find it a very comprehensive piece of legislation that's leading in this province, in this country and indeed in North America.

There are good parts of the government's Bill 13, their anti-bullying bill, that we would like to merge into Mrs. Witmer's bill, the honourable member from Kitchener–Waterloo. The government had every opportunity to do that after first reading, when the House leaders were having discussions. And the minister; our critic Lisa MacLeod, the member for Nepean–Carleton; and Mrs. Witmer, the honourable member from Kitchener–Waterloo, were having some discussions about how to, in a somewhat unprecedented way but a way they often do in Ottawa, pull the two bills after first reading. Therefore

there wouldn't be this debate, if they were to go into committee to be merged together—the best of both worlds. It would come out of committee on agreement, unanimous consent perhaps, and bring it back to the House and then the debate we'd be having today would be on a merged bill. We would call it a government bill. It would be on a merged bill with the best of Bill 13 and Bill 14. Unfortunately, that hasn't happened.

I still think the government knows the way out of this, but refuses to take that route. I would encourage them to come to their senses about this. I understand they're having a press conference this afternoon to try and embarrass us or whatever. We have done our best to work with the government. We understand it's a minority Parliament and that working together is what we should do, and you guys across the way keep carrying on like you have a majority. Shame on you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I can speak for people in my riding, where we have seen the tragic face of bullying. The story is about 10 years old, but it's worth repeating.

We had five beautiful young girls in Nickel Belt who made a suicide pact because they had been bullied in school. Out of those five beautiful girls, two of them died in that suicide pact and the other three managed to hang on.

I was a health care practitioner at the time and we spent a lot of time in that school. We spent a lot of time talking to the kids and asking them what went on. All of the kids knew what was going on. All of the kids knew that those five girls were being bullied, but nobody knew what to do. Nobody knew how to address it. Nobody knew how to reach out. Nobody knew how to help them.

Is there room for us to move? Absolutely. Bullying is still there in some of the schools. Because of the tragedy that happened in my riding, I would say a lot of the schools have put in good programs that help prevent all sorts of bullying. The kids understand, and the young people understand what it means to be bullied. They understand how to prevent it. They understand how to help one another, but all this happened because time, effort and resources were put into those schools to make sure that we teach those youth what to do, how to recognize it.

The two bills that we have in front of us, Bill 13 and Bill 14, once merged together and once we pick the best ideas from each, could do the same thing. The progressive programs we now have in Nickel Belt could be available to all. Let's move on.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. John Milloy:** It's a pleasure to speak again to add some comments and questions after hearing from the opposition House leader. Unfortunately, his speech was interrupted by ringing of the bells for 30 minutes, yet again; I think another indication that the opposition is not that serious about moving forward with this bill.

He spoke a lot about the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the private member's bill that she put for-

ward. Again, I want to reiterate, to put on the record, the openness of this government from day one to work with the opposition—in particular, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the member from Nepean–Carleton—in order to take what was the best of the two bills and put together one that was stronger.

We had what I felt were many productive discussions amongst House leaders about how we could move forward, a number of ways that we could reach agreement on sections that would move forward. Those collapsed because, quite frankly, the opposition didn't want to co-operate on that. But at the same time, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo's bill has gone to committee. We would be very happy to vote in favour of the government bill, send it to the same committee and continue to find ways to strengthen it.

To that end, the Minister of Education has provided the opposition a very detailed list of amendments that the government is willing to entertain, is willing to agree to, which would take what was the best from Bill 14 and add it to Bill 13.

The Minister of Education just handed this to me: "Definition of bullying"—a big issue—"Expanded definition of bullying to include cyberbullying, school climate surveys, principal's duty to investigate reports of serious student incidents"—and I could go on.

I think what's important for members to understand, and for those watching on television to understand, is the government's willingness to work with the opposition, to work with the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and bring forward the best bill possible.

1000

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to have a couple of minutes to add my voice in the conversation on Bill 13, and obviously on Bill 14 as well.

I'm interested in the remarks made by the government House leader because of the fact that, at this point, there has been no formal recognition. I think that, on this side, we look at Bill 14 in terms of the way in which it expresses concerns over pieces in Bill 13 that are missing.

Particularly, I just would want to comment on the whole issue of anti-bullying awareness, and part of that anti-bullying awareness piece is also recognizing the kinds of issues that perpetrators have and the important role that any piece of legislation should deal with—the victims, obviously, very clearly, first and foremost, but also the question of the perpetrators, in dealing with prevention and treatment.

I remember having a student many years ago who had been caught intimidating other students. When I knew that she was going to be going to the detention centre if she so much as threatened another student, never mind beat them up, which was usually what she did, I said to her, "Come on. You're too old for this. You're not supposed to beat up people." Her answer to me, very simple, said it all. She said, "Well, what do you do when you're

mad?" That's the kind of intervention and opportunity that is in Bill 14, and that's what we need to have.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** This is the first time I believe I've had the opportunity to rise and discuss the efforts made on behalf of this Legislature to address the issues of bullying. Maybe a perspective from the outside of this Legislature will help aid in the discussion.

I'm a parent of two young kids. My daughter is eight, my son is five and a half, and they're looking forward to having this type of protection. They understand it. We talk about it.

Also, in my riding, the visits I make to grade schools, to the grade 5 civics classes and to the grade 10s—we talk about this piece of legislation. It's interesting that within the brief hour that I have to talk to students in their schools about bullying, we've come to the resolution, to the conclusion that it's important that we need to address the issue, that those who are being bullied need protection, that those who feel marginalized and pointed out due to their sexuality, their physical attributes, their culture, their heritage, their language, their name, their height, their weight, the colour of their hair—it doesn't matter. Kids can be picked on for any reason. What's interesting is how quickly they come to the conclusion and to the resolution that it's a type of protection that—it's been far too long since it's been addressed.

Also, this House, potentially, is suffering from never having addressed the issue in our own educational system. We seem to be a group that has never had the ability within our school system to understand the impacts of bullying. We could have certainly used a couple of lessons in terms of how to act and to behave in our schools. We'd be getting along a lot better in this House if that were the case.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments? Further debate? Sorry. Member for Simcoe–Grey, you have two minutes for a reply.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Yes. Let's repeat it all again.

I just want to thank the member for Nickel Belt. Obviously she's got some good programming in her riding. As she said, let's get on with this so that all of the children in our schools can benefit from that type of programming—progressive programming, as she called it—with respect to anti-bullying.

The member for York Simcoe, I thank her for her comments, and the member for Algoma–Manitoulin and the government House leader. I see the list that the minister has provided the House leader as possibly a small step forward, some progress. We hadn't seen that up until this moment. The fact that the approach that the government took up to this moment has been—at one point they did agree to have this bill along with Mrs. Witmer's bill, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, in committee after first reading, but then the minister sent along a letter to both our critic Lisa MacLeod from



Nepean–Carleton and Mrs. Witmer from Kitchener–Waterloo, dictating what clauses we could look at and what clauses we couldn't look at.

We cannot allow a minister of the crown of a minority government under any circumstances to dictate what our committees are going to do in this Legislature. Committees are to be distanced from any influence in that way. Committee members are free to do what the committee wants to do, and we need to make sure that that is absolutely respected, particularly when the opposition has a majority in this House by two votes, and we have a majority in committee.

People want to know where this bogged down. It bogged down with the government dictating what a committee is going to do on this particular subject, and that simply isn't acceptable. It shouldn't be acceptable to any party in this House, and it just shows the government continues to rule like they have a majority, like the arrogant way they did in the last eight years.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** On behalf of my constituents, I rise to participate in the debate on Bill 13. It's probably an issue that I've received as much communication on as any bill that has ever been before the House, and I can say that overwhelmingly, the tone and the message that I've been asked to bring to this House is one of great frustration with this government for having taken an issue that is of such importance and made it complex in a way that was unnecessary to do. This is an issue that we should have been able and should still be able to find common ground among all parties and make a decision to move forward in the interest of our children. And yet this important piece of legislation has been allowed to become polarizing, unnecessarily so.

I want to share and put on the record a communication I've received from Ms. Karen Sebben, who is with a very highly respected organization called Many Voices—One vision to eliminate bullying. I'd like to read it and ask members of the Legislature to consider her thoughts: "It has been brought to our attention that public comments from the Liberal Party are quite opposite from the comments made behind closed doors when it comes to anti-bullying legislation. This is very disturbing, as we were hoping all parties would work together for the common good of our students in this province. We ask why it is not the intention of the Liberal government to work collaboratively with the opposition on anti-bullying legislation? Anti-bullying legislation of any kind must be non-partisan. The issue of bullying is a social issue and should be everyone's concern. It should be tackled with the same vigour as the Ornge air ambulance fiasco. Sadly, we ask ourselves how many more losses we need to see before we agree on an anti-bullying bill that protects all students. We implore you to put aside your obstinate thought process and do what is right for the children of Ontario."

1010

Speaker, it's that obstinate thought process that concerns us. We have two bills before the House: one intro-

duced by the government, the other by my colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. Both deal with the issue of bullying. The difference between the two bills is that the legislation being proposed and tabled by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo is strictly focused on the issue of bullying. The bill introduced by the government contains clauses that we fail to understand why the government felt necessary to insert into that bill.

We proposed to the government that what should happen is that both bills, having been tabled, should go to committee so that we can, in fact, work together collaboratively to ensure that we have the best possible piece of legislation that addresses the issue of bullying. The government agreed to that, and then issued conditions that essentially took off the table a number of areas that were of concern to the official opposition. That is not a way to work collaboratively on this issue. We believe very firmly that it is in the best interests of ending up with the best possible legislation that both of those bills should go to committee. They should go to committee now.

Unfortunately, we have no reason to trust that the government will do what it says it will do once there is second reading on this bill. I believe that if the government wants to indicate good will, they will agree to refer both of those bills to committee.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** It's unfortunate—in one sense, I suppose it's a good thing—that the people who are watching the proceedings here can't see the members of the government and can't hear them, because what's going on right now is bullying at its best. I'm making a recommendation, making a proposal; the minister, Ms. Wynne, continues to heckle me, doesn't want to hear what I'm saying. She's entitled, you see, to disagree with me, but one would expect that she would at least allow a member of the Legislature to express his or her views without being heckled and bullied by a minister of the crown. I think we need bullying legislation for this place. It may put Ms. Wynne in her place. We would support that.

There's something that has happened here. Those who have been following the proceedings have been watching the dysfunction of this place. They've been watching a government that fails, first of all, to respect the official opposition and the express will of the Legislature. They have refused our request to move both bills into the committee so that we can, in fact, work together and find a resolution to this important issue. The government has also refused to accept the will of the Legislature when we had a vote here that we should strike a select committee of the Legislature to deal with the issue at Ornge.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** We hear the cackles over there and we hear the bullying that's going on. They don't want to be exposed for how they're suppressing the work of the Legislature. That's why I have no choice. Because they

refuse to strike the select committee of the Legislature, I have no choice but to move adjournment of this debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We're on the clock. I was about to stand.

Interjection.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has moved adjournment, but I'd note for the member that the time on the clock was almost—I was ready to stand up. So this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming Dr. Elise Wong—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Moridi, you'd have to be in your own seat.

The member from London—Kent—Middlesex.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm really honoured this morning to introduce David and Jean Bonsfield. David and Jean Bonsfield are the family I lived with when I was a page back in 1991. So it's really nice to have them here.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Please join me in welcoming Dr. Elise Wong, of the Ontario Dental Association, to the House.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. As you know, Deputy Premier, the rate of growth in our economy continues to trail behind the national average. Our unemployment rates are higher than the national average and have been for some 63 straight months. Ontario has half a million unemployed people looking for work.

Deputy Premier, how can you possibly say that Ontario's economy is doing well?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We had 46,000 net new jobs last month. And what has her party's answer been? Today, we're trying to debate the healthy homes tax credit. What do they do? They stall it in committee. When we want to talk about the economy in this House, when we're debating the budget bill, what does your party do? You're concerned about unemployment? Why won't you let us debate it? Why are you shutting down debate? And, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections: Ornge. Ornge. Ornge.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order please. I know you're all having fun, but this is my first

day and I would just ask us to be a little bit civil to each other. Okay?

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Calling out names and calling names and shutting down the House—maybe they want to take the advice that the Kitchener-Waterloo Record gave to the member for Cambridge this morning: "If this budget dies, all bets on the Cambridge hospital expansion are off." Mr. Leone should keep this in mind and think long and hard before he votes to defeat the Liberals in the House.

Start debating. Start putting forward ideas. Quit the games, quit the name-calling and act like a responsible opposition and act in the best interests of your—

Interjections: Ornge. Ornge. Ornge.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would say that despite the protestations of the Deputy Premier, the facts speak for themselves. Last year, Ontario's economic growth sat at 1.8%, lower than the national average. Your own budget expects growth to be, in 2012, even lower at 1.7%, still lower than the national average. Even two years down the road, your budget hopes Ontario economic growth will sit at 2.2%, still lower than the national average.

Deputy Premier, don't you think Ontarians deserve a plan that's a little bit better than "possibly average"?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker: 345,000 new jobs since the bottom of the recession, more than the rest of the country combined.

But again, I ask the official opposition—we agree, the economy is first and top priority—why won't you debate the budget motion? Why do you ring the bells? Why do you insist on calling names? Look at this behaviour, Mr. Speaker, from the party of William Davis, the party of John Robarts, the party of Leslie Frost. Look at this. They don't want to talk about the economy. They are no opposition. They aren't putting forward ideas. They're playing games. They ought to be working with us and with the third party to move Ontario forward instead of this silly name-calling, the silly games in committee and preventing legitimate debate on the budget—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Again, back to the facts, Mr. Speaker. We have put forward a number of proposals for a jobs and growth plan, which have been consistently ignored by this minister and this government.

This budget does not outline anything that resembles a long-term plan to bring Ontario back to growth and productivity. For the past six months, we've been putting forward ideas to bring back Ontario, to put us back on to a road to prosperity and growth, and you've consistently knocked each and every one down.

Why is it, Deputy Premier? Can you tell us today why you've failed to include even one of our ideas in your budget?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, there are a number of ideas in the budget that are very consistent



with what that member and her party have put forward, and most people know that. In fact, we've been criticized in some circles for being too much like you. As the Premier says, they say we're spending too much, and they say we're not spending enough. We think we've got it right, Mr. Speaker.

But I don't understand a party—if you've got such great ideas, why don't you stop the yelling? Why don't you stop the name-calling? Why don't you let committees work? Why don't you let the budget debate unfold? Why don't you quit scheduling nomination meetings? Why don't you do what your own constituents are telling you? Why don't you work for a better Ontario and stand up for this province, instead of the foolish, silly—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Sit down, please. Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please. I know, again, that you're having fun, but let's put it this way: If you ask a question and you want the answer, I have to hear both sides. If the noise continues, I'm not hearing the question, neither am I hearing the answer. So I would just ask everybody to tone it down a little.

Next question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, the former president of the Liberal Party of Canada, Alfred Apps, testified in the public accounts committee that Ornge did “nothing wrong”—did nothing wrong in setting up a web of spin-off companies that were siphoning off public funds. Then Mr. Apps proceeded to attack the Auditor General, and he called his report into question, referred to it as “misleading,” “incomplete” and “riddled with error.”

I ask the Deputy Premier, does he believe his friend the former president of the Liberal Party of Canada in this matter, or does he believe the Auditor General of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I said to the media yesterday in scrum that we have great confidence in the Auditor General, support his recommendations and, indeed, have moved forward on his recommendations. The minister has now brought forward legislation that incorporates many of the Auditor General's recommendations. As I also said to the media yesterday, there are times, obviously, when the Auditor General brings forward things that none of us want to see, but we respect the work, continue to respect him and are most grateful for his work on this particular file.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** That's encouraging, Speaker. Let me quote once again from Mr. Apps, who went on to say in his testimony, “To the extent of all matters within my

knowledge, the board and management of Ornge more than did their job.” Even more revealing was his insistence that “the government was thoroughly, painstakingly and, in all cases, truthfully briefed in advance of Ornge taking any of these actions.”

1040

Speaker, we have heard in this House repeatedly, for months, from the Minister of Health, from the Minister of Finance and from the Premier that they knew nothing about what was going on at Ornge; that's why they couldn't do anything. In light of this revelation from the Minister of Finance's friend the former president of the Liberal Party of Canada, will he tell us why he stood by and allowed this scandal to take place?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Ornge paid a lobbyist named Kelly Mitchell \$400,000 to keep the Conservative Party informed about Ornge.

Let's see who Mr. Mitchell is. He's a top insider in Mr. Hudak's leadership. He sat on the board of directors for Ornge and five for-profit companies, the same companies that paid Chris Mazza \$1.4 million and obstructed the Auditor General. He also made \$17,000 in contributions to PC candidates and personally donated \$7,500. Among those who have benefited from them are the leader of the Conservative Party, the member for Simcoe North, the member for Whitby—Oshawa, the member for Leeds—Grenville, the member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington and the member for Thornhill.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has taken the appropriate—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Final supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Well, Mr. Speaker, everyone listening to the Minister of Finance can see that he has no interest in answering the question. What he does do is, he takes the same approach that Mr. Apps took when he first started in his testimony yesterday, boldly defending the indefensible. But Mr. Apps ended up running out of this place when he was found to be telling us less than the truth.

I'd like to know today: Will the minister at least admit that he and the Premier and the Minister of Health knew full well what was going on at Ornge, and would he tell us, once and for all, why they chose to turn their backs and to ignore the scandal that was brewing under their watch?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The government and the Minister of Health took the appropriate steps in a timely fashion to respond as information became available about Ornge. When we became aware of the situation, we asked the auditor to go in. The auditor went in and did a very good piece of work, Mr. Speaker. The minister has brought forward legislation that deals with many of the challenges that were raised by the auditor. We support the auditor in this. We continue to do that. The minister called in the police when it became obvious—after forensic auditors that we sent in did their job. The minister and the government have acted appropriately, in a timely fashion—as information became aware.

I am proud of the front-line workers at Ornge. I want to continue to build that service so all Ontarians can continue to have faith in that service which is so vital to all of our families and all of our communities in all parts of the province.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Acting Premier. We've put forward concrete ideas to make the proposed budget a little fairer for the families that make Ontario work. One of them was asking Ontario's very wealthy to pay a little bit more and help ease the burden on everyday families. Can the Acting Premier explain the government's hesitation around this very simple and fair proposal?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, I want to acknowledge the accuracy of the fact that the third party have put forward a number of helpful proposals. I want to acknowledge the fact that the leader of the third party has taken one of the items that we had a very sincere disagreement about off the table today. I recognize that that was and is an important item for your party and the people whom you represent in this Legislature.

We will respond in the fullness of time to all of the leader's ideas, all of her party's ideas. We'll continue to work in a co-operative fashion because I believe that the third party wants to make this Legislature work. We take your suggestions seriously and we will respond in due course to all of them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you, Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the government's proposed budget leaves families falling further and further behind; there's no doubt about it. It would have been easy to oppose it. For New Democrats, it would have been very easy. But I am proud to say that we New Democrats are doing our very best to make this minority government work.

People have told us that Ontario's tax system is unfair and that those who can afford to pay more seem to be getting all the breaks. Why is the government reluctant to show them that that's not the case?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I concur with the leader of the third party that they in fact have made very reasonable efforts to keep this Legislature working. They brought forward a number of ideas. For instance, the freeze on the corporate tax rate—which we built into the budget—was as a result of the strong efforts of that leader and her party.

There are a number of other items on the table that have been brought forward in good faith. We will continue to work with them, leading up to the vote next Tuesday, to try to find a way to find accommodation to keep this Legislature working in the best interests of all Ontarians. I know that that is certainly in the interests of the third party.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Final supplementary?

**Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, I think that our New Democrat team has been more than reasonable, and the Conservative benches have been more than clear as well. They don't want the super rich to pay more; they want to see deeper cuts.

The ball is now in the Liberal government's court. Do they agree with them or do they agree with us?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll remind the leader of the third party of the areas that we do agree on. I know that she and her party support full-day learning; I think that's something we agree on. I know that you continue to support smaller class sizes; I know that you support more home care; I know you support the Ontario child benefit; I know that you support doubling the contraband tobacco enforcement; and I know that you support \$35 billion in infrastructure.

We are down to some issues that I concur we do have an obligation to respond to. We will do that at the appropriate time, working with the leader and her party. I think we've acted in good faith—we've acted on a number of your suggestions to date—and we look forward to resolving any outstanding issues before next Tuesday.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Acting Premier, but I have to say that restating what's in their unfair Liberal budget simply is not good enough, and I hope they're aware of that.

In a letter to the editor yesterday, Monica from Toronto wrote this: "People who earn over \$500,000 a year should have to pay an increase in their taxes. This would help pay for more spaces in daycare, which would be better because it would allow parents to go to work."

Does the Liberal government agree with Monica that we should be choosing child care over millionaires?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We believe all Ontarians should work together. We believe that wealthy Ontarians, middle-income Ontarians and Ontarians of more modest incomes, working together, can build a better province for all of us.

We're proud of our investments in child care. We are grateful for the support you have shown on a number of initiatives that are important, I know, to the people who you represent and the people who put us in the government benches.

We want to work together with all Ontarians. We think all of us working together will build a better province. It will build a better future. Child care is an important part of a caring society, and I look forward to further discussions with the third party over the course of the next several days.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The budget also leaves hospitals scrambling to provide services for everyday Ontarians and ignores folks who are struggling to make ends meet. Dianne from Carrying Place writes: "It once again puts the burden of paying the debt on those who can least



afford it.... I do not see anywhere in this budget where those in the upper income brackets are paying their fair share."

Why won't the McGuinty Liberals agree with the vast majority of Ontarians that health care should come before millionaires?

1050

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the member is putting forward an important point. There are a number of important initiatives in the budget. She's raised some other initiatives that are important to health care.

But here's what's at risk if the budget is defeated: the Cambridge Memorial Hospital expansion, the Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital expansion in Burlington, the Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —the North Wellington Health Care Mount Forest site renovation, the Renfrew Victoria Hospital dialysis program expansion, the St. Thomas Elgin general hospital renovation, the Brockville General Hospital expansion.

The leader of the third party has put forward additional ideas with respect to the provision of health care in this province. We take her party's suggestions and ideas seriously, and I look forward to hopefully resolving the issues that stand before us over the course of the next several days.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the government seems to be hemming and hawing over our very straightforward proposal to make the budget fairer. It's leaving families wondering what planet the government is actually on. Jeremiah from Toronto writes this: "If ordinary Ontarians are losing services to close the budget gap, the wealthy need to bear some of the burden as well."

Will the McGuinty Liberals side with us or with Conservatives who think that millionaires should come before daycares?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party has put forward a number of ideas that are worthy of consideration, some of which we have adopted even in the budget itself—the freezing of the corporate tax rate.

We do have to make certain that we stay on track to balance the budget by 2017-18. That's important to the people of Ontario too. Interest costs are now the third-largest item on our operating expense. If we fail to get back to balance in the timelines outlined, those interest costs will rise.

The leader of the third party has put forward some constructive ideas, some of which we've acted on, some of which we will likely continue to discuss over the course of the next several days. I hope we can come to a conclusion that allows this Legislature to do what the people of Ontario want, and that is to continue to work together to build a better future for all of our children.

## AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Deputy Premier: Yesterday in the public accounts committee, former Liberal Party president Alfred Apps confirmed what we have known for a long time: the involvement of Don Guy in the Ornge scandal. Based on sworn testimony in committee, Alfred Apps admitted, under intense questioning, that Apps had hired Don Guy, Dalton McGuinty's former chief of staff and election architect, to provide strategic advice on Ornge.

Speaker, can the Deputy Premier confirm for this House with certainty that Don Guy was abiding by all the requirements of the lobbying legislation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I think the opposition has to come clean. Will they stop stonewalling on bringing Kelly Mitchell to the committee so that he can give testimony? Why are you blocking his testimony at that committee? The Minister of Health has been there. Everyone that we've been required has been there.

They are trying to silence Kelly Mitchell, Mr. Speaker. They don't want his testimony in front of the committee because they know what he's done. They know what his role has been.

I ask the member opposite, will you agree to have that person appear before the public accounts committee and explain the work he did for Ornge and the advice he gave to your caucus and your leader on this issue? It's time for you to come clean on these issues.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Look, Speaker, the Deputy Premier knows well that Don Guy would have been legally prohibited from lobbying or sharing government information during his mandatory cooling-off period. It seems curious that Don Guy, mere months after leaving as the Premier's most senior adviser and election guru, could be retained to advise Ornge.

Speaker, the web continues to grow. Interestingly, during this same period, Don Guy was providing advice on Ornge, was being paid to run the Liberal campaign, and was advising other companies on how to lobby the McGuinty government.

Deputy Premier, will you commit to table a list of every company Don Guy was similarly advising on how to lobby your government? Secondly, would you tell us how you think it's possible that Don Guy was in compliance with lobbying laws?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I ask the member opposite, will Kelly Mitchell, who was paid \$400,000 to lobby the Conservative Party on behalf of Ornge, be called before the committee? It's a simple question. You can yell and you can scream and you can call names and you can act like children all you want—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would the member from Cambridge come to order, please?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's a very simple question: Will, in fact, you call Kelly Mitchell? Kelly Mitchell,

who sat on the board of five different companies, Mr. Speaker—

**Interjections:** Ornge. Ornge. Ornge.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please. At this point, the member for Simcoe North, I'm warning you.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, they can shout me down. They can't shout down the truth. They need to call Kelly Mitchell before the committee and come clean about his involvement in this situation.

## CHILD CARE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is to the Minister of Education. The budget put forward by this government failed to even mention child care. It can deny the existence of the current child care crisis, but experts say that without funding, thousands of spaces across the province will close.

We've put forward a reasonable plan to ask millionaires to pay a little more to support 4,000 child care spaces. Will the minister choose millionaires or child care?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm pleased to have a chance in this Legislature to speak about the strong record that our government has when it comes to child care.

When the federal government stepped away, it was our government who stepped up and provided \$63.5 million to permanently fill the gap that they had left. And we did not have one word from the opposition at that time calling their friends in Ottawa and asking them to step up for Ontario families.

Since 2003, child care funding has increased from \$532 million to \$869 million, a 63% increase. At the same time, we are rolling out right across the province all-day kindergarten, which will have a full investment of \$1.5 billion when it is fully rolled out in 2014.

Child care is an active file. We need to have a conversation with Ontario families and we look forward to doing that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Supplementary?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would like to go back to the Minister of Education. The government likes to say it's increasing funding for child care, but according to the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, child care funding "has been frozen for 15 years."

The NDP has put forward a simple proposal: Invest an additional \$50 million beyond the planned spending to support 4,000 child care spaces by asking the richest Ontarians to pay a tiny bit more.

Will the minister side with working moms and dads who need better child care or millionaires?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** As I have said, our record of support for child care has been very consistent. As we roll out full-day kindergarten right across the province, we have come forward with \$51 million in funding for

child care centres. We've provided \$12 million over five years for capital funding.

Speaker, I can tell you that child care is a very active file. We're looking at what a modern, sustainable child care system looks like when all of our 4- and 5-year-olds are in school. Our record for child care has been consistent. We continue to have important conversations about the future of child care in this province, and I look very much forward to continuing the important work that we are doing right now to design a modern child care system that lives compatibly with all-day kindergarten so that all of our kids can have the best that they can and everything that every parent wants for them.

1100

## ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Ms. Soo Wong:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, you introduced the Accepting Schools Act in November. Shortly after you introduced that legislation, the MPP for Kitchener-Waterloo also introduced a private member's bill, Bill 14, on anti-bullying. At that time, you said and the Premier also said that you would be willing to work with the opposition and include elements of Bill 14 in the Accepting Schools Act.

When the opposition's education critic, the member for Nepean-Carleton, had the second reading leadoff to the Accepting Schools Act she said, "Let's put these two bills into committee." She said that Ontarians want to work together.

Mr. Speaker, my students in Scarborough-Agincourt support the Accepting Schools Act. Through you to the minister: Minister, can you tell this House why you haven't passed the anti-bullying legislation yet?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member for Scarborough-Agincourt for her question because she has been an active participant in the debate on this legislation. However, it is very unfortunate that much of the debate time has been taken up with procedural games. The PC Party has disrupted the debate on this important legislation—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the minister to stick to the question asked on government policy.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** —six times, Speaker. In fact, this morning during debate on this very bill, we had the bells ringing.

What I have said on so many occasions is that this legislation must be in place—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please.

**Interjection:** It's out of order, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would agree with the member who made the comment that it's out of order. But if you continue to make the noise, I cannot hear the answer. So I would ask the opposition, if you would like me to hear the answer so I can rule, then I'd ask you to keep it very low. Minister?



**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Speaker, we look forward to getting Bill 13 to committee. We want to hear debate on it. We want to have conversation at committee so we can make Bill 13 the best bill that it can be. That's why I'm calling on the opposition to move Bill 13 to committee so that we can get to the important work of amending the legislation and incorporating elements of Bill 14. We always said we'd be open to making sure that we had the best bill, the strongest bill to protect all of our students. Let's get that bill to committee, and let's stop ringing bells.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's response. The minister is correct, and I have listened to the debate attentively in terms of the Accepting Schools Act on seven different occasions. What I've noticed is the PC Party has repeatedly said they want to work with us. In spite of all that, the bells have kept ringing, and this legislation which would make a real difference in the lives of Ontario kids isn't moving forward.

Yesterday during the debate, the member of Dufferin-Caledon said, "What I would like to see is for the minister to stand up and say what kind of discussions she's had with the member from Kitchener-Waterloo." Speaker, through you to the minister, will the minister tell the House how she has tried to work with the opposition to pass this legislation?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I really appreciate the chance to speak on the record about this. I met with the member from Nepean-Carleton and the member from Kitchener-Waterloo on February 23, Speaker. After that meeting, I thought that we had an understanding to move the legislation quickly to committee so that we could start helping kids right away. Since then, my staff have met with the member for Kitchener-Waterloo on several separate occasions, and I've had repeated correspondence with her.

Last week, on April 11, I sent the member another letter urging her to help move this legislation to committee, including a list that had more than half of her bill incorporated into the Accepting Schools Act. She asked for more specificity, Speaker, and yesterday, I sent the member a list with the entirety of the amendments in legislative language.

I will say again, Speaker, on this side of the House, we are deeply committed to making Ontario schools a more accepting space so that all of Ontario's students can be safe and protected and achieve their goals. We want to get this bill to committee. We want—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Please sit down.

The member from Newmarket-Aurora.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier. For the benefit of the Deputy Premier,

who appears not to be very well briefed on what is happening in this place, he should know that Kelly Mitchell has already been called to the committee, and he should know that we will support Kelly Mitchell coming to the committee. That will happen, and that now hopefully will stop the buffooning that's going on around this.

What I want to know from the Deputy Premier is: Will he agree and will the Premier agree to come to the committee and testify about what they knew?

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Sit down, please. Order. Stop the clock for a second.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please, on both sides. Order.

I'm going to remind the opposition party one more time: When your member is asking the question, if you make the noise, I'm not going to hear the question. So I hope you want to hear the answer. Otherwise I will continue to name members.

Deputy Premier?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, they just recently put a motion on the order paper to debate it next Wednesday. So it hasn't been called.

You can play all the silly games you want. We want to talk about the economy. We want to build a better future for Ontario. Quit playing games. Start acting like the great PC Party of the past.

Oh, and by the way, we've also just determined that Kelly Mitchell has also registered to lobby the federal government on behalf of Ornge. We'll be exploring those questions at committee, too. I'm delighted you finally put a motion on the order paper. Can we agree here and now to call him immediately rather than wait till next Wednesday to debate it? I wonder if we could do that.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order. The member from Peterborough, you're not helping my cause.

The member from Newmarket-Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Mr. Speaker, clearly the Deputy Premier has no idea how committees work. The fact that we have to wait until next Wednesday simply reaffirms why we need a select committee of the Legislature to get it done. That's why we need a select committee.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** That motion that I referred to to call Mr. Mitchell to committee was in fact a government motion, and the Conservative Chair of the committee deferred dealing with it until next week. I don't want to offend the sensibilities of the Chair or the House. I won't use some language, but it appears as though they won't want him at committee. Will you agree here and now to unanimous consent to call him immediately?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Yes, we will. On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to make the motion. I'll call his bluff right now.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would you please sit down? Order. We're in the middle of question period. I will move to the next question.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** On a point of order, Speaker—  
*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would the member please sit down? Stop the clock. The member knows fully well that during question period there are no points of order. New question.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Does the government think it's fair that people on social assistance, many of whom have disabilities, as he knows, many of whom have lost their jobs because of the recession, many of whom are struggling to put food on their children's plates, should have their benefits frozen and real incomes actually cut while millionaires are asked to do absolutely nothing to help with Ontario's financial problems?

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**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House have made no secret that the recent budget contained some very difficult decisions. But at the same time, I was very proud that we brought forward a budget that did not, as the Conservatives did, balance our budget on the backs of the poor. I am proud of our record in terms of combating poverty in the province of Ontario, the work we have done in terms of the Ontario child benefit, in terms of full-day kindergarten.

The member raises the issue of social assistance rates. We have raised social assistance rates some seven times. We have also changed the rules to make it easier for individuals to transition from social assistance to the working world. But at the same time, we admit—we acknowledge—that more work needs to be done, particularly in the area of social assistance, which is why we have brought forward one of the most comprehensive reviews of the system in decades.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Again to the Acting Premier: Put food in the budget, members. They're here today, and they're here with a clear message: We need to help vulnerable Ontarians. Some members on the government side actually agree with me on this. The Attorney General, for example, is quoted in his local newspaper as saying, "The people at the bottom end of the economic scale, the people that get ... ODSP ... have not had increases that keep up with what they're requiring in life."

Will the Acting Premier—and his own Attorney General—support our simple proposal to increase support for people with disabilities on ODSP, and ask millionaires just to pay a little bit more?

**Hon. John Milloy:** The honourable member and her party do not have a monopoly on compassion for the

most vulnerable in our society. I recall the most recent election, when I was asked to participate in an all-candidates meeting on poverty. To prepare for that, I picked up the NDP platform and tried to find the section on poverty. It took me four tries to find a couple of sentences at the bottom of a page that I believe talked about natural resources or something else, and the main thrust of it was the social assistance review.

We recognize that we need a comprehensive transformation of social assistance in this province. That is why we have asked Frances Lankin, a former distinguished member of this Legislature and of the New Democratic Party, along with Dr. Munir Sheikh, who is a former head of Statistics Canada, to take a look at the social assistance system and report back on comprehensive changes. We look forward to that report; I think all members do. It's going to provide a great pathway for how we want to move forward.

### ENERGY RATES

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. My constituents are pleased with the work our government has done to modernize an electricity system that needed to be fixed. While we repaired transmission lines and invested in new supply, we also phased out coal, because it was causing smog in places like Guelph and making people sick, costing taxpayers \$4 billion a year in health costs. These are accomplishments that we can all be proud of.

Families all across this province have been doing their part to achieve a clean, modern and reliable electricity system. They are investing in a system that can serve them today, but also tomorrow and 20 years from now. But my constituents are concerned about the cost.

Minister, can you please tell me what you have been doing to moderate costs in our electricity system?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member from Guelph has been a leading advocate, not only in cleaning up the air in the province of Ontario, but in advocating ways where families and businesses can help moderate costs.

Here are a few of the things. Two of our largest agencies, Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation, have launched a cost reduction exercise. They've already taken out half a billion dollars in costs, and they're continuing to do work.

When we launched the results of our feed-in tariff, our green energy review just a couple of weeks ago, we strengthened our approach to green energy. We're going to get more jobs out of it, but we also lowered the prices for the green energy we are bringing on.

Third, we launched an international comparison approach for our energy agencies to make sure that they're working as efficiently and as effectively as possible. It's all about finding ways to help families and businesses.

Fourth, we've launched a review of our local distribution companies; those are the ones that bring electricity down to families, homes and businesses. We've looked



to see whether we can find savings there, whether there's a better approach.

And fifth, we've launched a review of two of our major planning agencies, the OPA and IESO—all ways to take costs out of the system and help families and businesses.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I know that my constituents want to learn about the work that's being done to drive efficiencies and find cost savings, both big and small. I think we can all agree that every dollar counts.

I know that much of the change in the price of electricity is due to our government's commitment to replacing dirty coal-fired generation with cleaner sources of power by 2014. Coal is cheap, but it pollutes the air we breathe and it harms the health of Ontarians.

I know my constituents in Guelph were very pleased this week to learn that Canadian Solar is expanding its production and creating even more jobs in Guelph.

While it is important to moderate costs in the electricity system, it's also important to provide families and businesses with programs that help them as we make this transition to cleaner power. Minister, can you please tell this House what you are doing to help families and businesses with the cost of their electricity bills?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** It is what we're doing together. In the budget that we have proposed, we're maintaining the Ontario clean energy benefit—10% off the bottom line of the bill for families and many businesses to help them with those costs of electricity. We've got the energy and property tax credit, the energy portion of which is \$204 of assistance. We've got the northern Ontario energy credit—again, special issues in the north, another \$200.

We've got the industrial conservation initiative, which allows 150 of our largest energy consumers in the province of Ontario who employ thousands of people to save a significant amount of money by reducing the energy they use in our highest-demand times during the course of a year. It's a great initiative.

We've also got the northern industrial electricity rate program, which reduces costs for businesses in the north, again, with special issues.

These and more initiatives are helping families and helping businesses.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** My question is to the Minister of Education. I've recently learned that the dignity and human rights of children with special needs are being grossly violated in Simcoe county schools. Shocking images of education assistants herding children like cattle with rugby blocker pads as big as me, and doing it in public, demonstrates something is broken in our school system. This deplorable method of restraint seems to have emerged because proper assessment and individual education plans have not been implemented.

Minister, you have an opportunity to protect the most vulnerable children in our communities by issuing a directive the moment we walk out of this chamber today. Will you please do the right thing and intervene immediately?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to say, first and foremost, that I understand that this board will be re-evaluating this decision, and that is the appropriate thing for them to have done.

I am very proud of the record of our government in ensuring that every child has a world-class education. This is an important—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Nepean—Carleton, come to order, please.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** —to ensure that all of our children have a strong-quality education.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** If I could be heard across the heckling, Speaker, I would love to share with this House the fact that in special education we have seen an increase, since our government took office, of 55%. We have seen an increase of over \$893 million. And that's not all. When it comes to autism support, when we got in here—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** —we removed the government's previous age six cut-off—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Speaker, if this government wants to get serious about stopping bullying in schools, let's get education assistants, the people who are employed by the schools, to stop bullying children who are the most vulnerable in our community.

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In fact, all the following organizations adamantly agree: Special Education Advisory Committee, the Geneva Centre for Autism, Community Living Ontario—the list goes on and on, Speaker. This practice not only labels these students but also promotes a culture of fear in our classrooms. You're doing that. You're allowing that to happen.

Minister, the Simcoe county school board has failed to act, deferring this till June. OPSEU actually openly condones this type of restraint. This is why you cannot slough this matter off to the local school board. You must use your authority as a minister to stand up for the rights of children with special needs in Simcoe county schools immediately. Will you issue this directive this morning, yes or no?

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order. Sit down, please.

Minister?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Speaker, I'm not going to take lessons from the opposition on supporting students with special needs. We know the challenges faced by

families with autistic children, and while we may not meet all of the requests of parents, we have a plan to help children access more autism services. They cut off children at the age of six, no questions asked.

We are supporting families, Speaker. We have quadrupled investment when it comes to autism support. We have almost tripled the number of children receiving that support. We are conducting research, investing \$15 million in research, and we have more early years support and more EAs in our classrooms. I'm proud of our record, and I would contrast it to the opposition's record any day, any time.

As I have said, Simcoe region is reviewing their process. They should do that, Speaker. But we will stand up for children with special needs—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please. Stop the clock. Please sit down.

New question.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The decision to sell off Ontario Northland puts real economic development at risk, not to mention 1,000 jobs. The cancellation of our public transportation system leaves families threatened.

We've put forward a proposal to help stop the sale of Ontario Northland. Will you please explain to the mayors and to the rest of northern Ontario why you choose to take millionaires over the seniors who need the train, the only train, to get to medical treatments in southern Ontario?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Speaker, this was a very difficult decision that this government had to make, but it's a necessary decision. If we're going to invest in health care and education, we have to make choices. Those choices are difficult. One of those choices was to divest the ONTC. We're going to move ahead with that divestment.

I should let the member know that divestment is not foreclosure. There is business as usual as we move forward with this divestment. At the end of the day, we want a much stronger transportation system in place, a more sustainable transportation system in place, and we're going to move in that direction. We're going to work with our stakeholders to achieve that direction.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** My next question is to the Minister of Agriculture. The north isn't the only region—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** My supplementary—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** You've got to ask a supplementary to the first question.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's the same subject.

The north isn't the only region that feels let down by this budget and this government's lack of consultation. The unilateral termination of the horse racing revenue-sharing program has left families feeling burned in places like Sarnia, Windsor and Niagara Falls—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member knows the rules. You've got to ask the supplementary to the first question.

I will now move to the next questioner: the member from Peterborough.

#### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, I understand that you'll be meeting with the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada minister, the Honourable Gerry Ritz, later this week, along with your counterparts from Canada's provinces and territories at the federal, provincial and territorial meeting. With agriculture being an area of responsibility that's shared in Canada's Constitution, Ontario farmers look to the province to work with the federal government to ensure the continuing competitiveness and long-term sustainability of agriculture and the agri-food sectors. This includes the Growing Forward program, which I know farmers in Peterborough are particularly interested in, as the current agreement expires next year.

Speaker, through you to the Minister: Please share with this House your plans for discussions with the Honourable Minister Ritz and other agriculture ministers.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'm pleased to note that the member is correct. We will be meeting tomorrow with the Honourable Gerry Ritz and my provincial counterparts, trying to set the table for agricultural policy over the next several years. At our meeting, we will begin negotiations on Growing Forward 2 and we'll be calling on the federal government to renew certain parts of that agreement to enhance the vitality of Ontario agriculture.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, and as members opposite should know, virtually all agricultural programs are jointly shared between the federal government and provincial governments. We're all key strategic players in that economic development. The Constitution requires us to be collaborative. I suspect that that reality, coupled with any sense of a shared purpose, will move us forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for that very comprehensive and detailed answer.

Minister, I want to pass on to the farmers in my riding that we're working hard to ensure the continuing support for the best interests of Ontario's farmers. I know that farmers in Peterborough are also looking to our government to be firm with the federal government on several issues. Indeed, recent media coverage of trade negotia-



tions has led to speculation that the federal government might sacrifice a vital part of our country's agricultural support system—supply management—for the sake of other boards of trade.

Minister, in your discussions with Minister Ritz and other ag ministers across Confederation, can you please inform this House if you will be discussing your ongoing Ontario support for supply management?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I want all members of this House to know that we will continue to press the federal government with respect to a commitment to supply management. In fact, I recently joined with the Quebec minister, the Honourable Pierre Corbeil, in writing to the federal minister on this issue. As two ministers representing 75% of Canada's dairy, poultry and egg producers, we said: "Supply-managed sectors have demonstrated stability where other sectors have sought government assistance to overcome economic hardship. This price stability at market translates into significant benefits to farmers, to processors, to consumers and to the Canadian economy at large."

I am hopeful and fully anticipate that Minister Ritz will reassure us, this government and all Ontarians that the federal government remains committed to supply management.

#### NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

On February 9 of this year the federal government issued a request for expressions of interest to gauge stakeholder interest in participating in the future of Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd.'s Chalk River nuclear laboratories. This is Canada's premier nuclear research facility and the economic impact of its 3,000 highly paid and skilled jobs on the local municipalities and economy is enormous.

I've written both the federal minister and your office on this issue. He has responded; you have not. Based on his reply, they would be open to a dialogue with the province, but his office has not heard from you, either.

Minister, have you contacted Minister Joe Oliver? If not, why are you sitting on the sidelines while the future of Ontario's nuclear industry hangs in the balance?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I have received the member's letter and I thank him for sending me that letter.

I'll tell you, we are really serious about ensuring that our nuclear industry in this province does well. That's why we have been working very closely with the federal government to ensure that we move forward, through the leadership of the Minister of Energy, with our refurbishment of our nuclear units. There are hundreds of thousands of jobs in this province that depend on the nuclear industry.

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I wish, though, that the PC Party would support the other jobs that we're creating. Just in the last few weeks, IBM made an important announcement here in Toronto:

145 high-end jobs. But guess what, Mr. Speaker? They wouldn't have been here if it were not for the program that we provided support for them on and that your party doesn't support.

This last month alone, 46,000 jobs were created in this province, jobs that we're very, very proud of. We're going to keep creating jobs. The best thing we—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Minister, it's time to stop with the gobbledygook and answer the question. You have not contacted the federal minister. The nuclear industry research division at Chalk River is vital to the industry across Canada: 70,000 jobs, most of them right here in the province of Ontario.

If Chalk River Laboratories is revitalized as a national research facility, it will support tens of thousands of research projects with wide-ranging applications, including health, environment, energy, natural resources, nanotechnology, aerospace, automotive and manufacturing. Why do you continue to sit on the sidelines in this process and not speak directly to your federal counterpart when the new future of this research facility hangs in the balance? Get off your hands and start talking to Minister Oliver.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order. Sit down, please.

Minister.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** This side of the House has shared this member's concern for a long time about the lack of support from the federal government for important parts of the energy system here in this province. We've stood up for the energy workers of this province, whether it's clean energy, whether it's nuclear power, time and time again.

The federal government decided, in the middle of our consideration of a new build, to completely restructure AECL. Where was your voice then, when the nuclear workers of this province needed you? Today you stand up.

I've got a number, Mr. Speaker. It's 1-613-992-4211. It's Stephen Harper's number. Give him a call. Finally, for once, stand up for the workers of this province.

#### HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre par intérim. Families across the province are concerned about what your budget is doing to their community hospitals and to their local health care services. With more than half of Ontario's hospitals facing cuts or in absolute freeze on their budgets, in northern Ontario we're already hearing about bed and program closures.

Can the Acting Premier explain why his government seems to be choosing millionaires over local health care?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm quite proud of the fact that the largest expense growth item in our budget is home

care, more home care, and I appreciate the member opposite's support on that initiative.

I'm also proud of the investments we're making in Cambridge and in Burlington and a number of other communities—Leeds–Grenville—which the Conservatives want to vote against. Those are important initiatives for better health care in Ontario.

The Minister of Health has laid out an ambitious agenda to provide the right care in the right place at the right time, Mr. Speaker: better home care; better acute care; investing more in long-term care, which we're all committed to. We're going to continue to work on those things. We appreciate working with the third party to keep this Legislature alive so that we can continue to build on the enormous achievements this Legislature has made in health care over the last eight years.

#### NOTICE OF POINT OF PRIVILEGE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I want to give notice that I will be raising a point of privilege from today's proceedings with regard to statements by the Deputy Premier that I take offence to, questioning my impartiality as the Chair of the public accounts committee. I note that there have also been tweets arising from staff of the Premier's office with regard to this, so I will raise this in writing as soon as possible, likely early next week, Mr. Speaker.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent, as proposed by the Deputy Premier earlier, that Mr. Kelly Mitchell be called to testify at the public accounts committee, along with the Deputy Premier and the Premier.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I just want to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for his comments and that he would be filing an order.

With regard to Mr. Klees, he has moved unanimous consent to order Mr. Kelly Mitchell to appear before the committee next Wednesday, along with the Deputy Premier and the Premier. Agreed? I heard a no.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order, the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Mr. Speaker, I took it, when the Deputy Premier proposed that we would have unanimous consent to call Mr. Kelly Mitchell, that he was serious and that he would have the support—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would say to the member that I requested unanimous consent; I did not receive it.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Who said no?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I want to know who said no.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Newmarket–Aurora on a new point of order.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I highly resent the implication that we were not serious. I will make the following motion, and I will leave out the reference to the Deputy Premier, and I will leave out the reference to the Premier, because apparently members of the government objected to that.

I will ask for unanimous consent that Kelly Mitchell be called to appear before the public accounts committee, and that the Clerk be directed to schedule him at the earliest possible time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I have a motion from Mr. Klees that Mr. Kelly Mitchell be called to the committee and that the Clerk be directed to request him to appear as soon as possible. Agreed? Okay, that has been agreed to.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would put a motion forward asking for unanimous consent that the Premier and the Deputy Premier be directed to appear before the public accounts committee by the Clerk at the earliest possible convenience.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has moved that the Premier and the Deputy Premier be called to the committee, and the Clerk—

**Hon. John Milloy:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'm in the middle of a motion.

**Hon. John Milloy:** All right.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Do I have agreement? I heard a no.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order, the House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize for interrupting you before, but I think that if you review Hansard, the member did not ask for unanimous consent. He just put forward a random motion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** That is not a point of order.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.*



## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** With great pleasure today, I introduce a number of members from the Sikh community here and also invite everyone to attend the reception being held from 4:30 to 6 o'clock at the dining hall.

We have representatives from the Malton gurdwara. We have Manohar Singh Bal; we have Sukhdeep Dhaliwal; we have Manjinder Singh; we have Mr. Ghuman. Who else do we have here? We have Jasbir Singh, and I believe we have—those are all the five here? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for that introduction, and I do want to help out my colleague from across the way to introduce our friends here in the House today.

Last weekend, Sikhs across Ontario and the world celebrated Vaisakhi, and many of our legislative colleagues are also amongst those celebrating, so I'd like to welcome the Canadian Sikh Association to Queen's Park today. At 4:30, they will be hosting a reception in the legislative dining room in celebration of Vaisakhi. All MPPs are invited and requested to attend.

With us today, as my member across has explained, Manohar Singh Bal is here, Baljit Ghuman is here, Jasbir Singh is here, Sukhdeep Dhaliwal is here, and Manjinder Singh, as well as Rampal Singh.

To all of you, welcome to Queen's Park. We appreciate all that you do.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Introduction of guests?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'd like to welcome guests—they are not quite here; they've been marching from my riding of Davenport. They will be arriving in the Legislature soon, doing a media conference. It's folks from the Put Food in the Budget campaign, who are working very hard to try to increase benefits for people who are struggling in this city, to increase welfare benefits. They will be in the media studio at 1:30.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'd just remind the member, and I know many of us make the mistakes, but you can only be recognized if you stand in your own seat. I was having difficulty seeing the guy behind you to realize you are in the wrong place.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### I LOVE DANCE

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Today we're celebrating Canadian dance, a subject that this House is very familiar with because there is a lot of dancing going on in here.

In celebration of all forms of dance, today the Canadian Dance Assembly kicks off its six-year campaign, "I

Love Dance." I would like to support this campaign by reading its manifesto:

"We declare that dance, in all its diverse expressions, is a force for social good and human advancement.

"In support of this we uphold the following principles:

"Dance is an instinctive human birthright and a life-long contributor to health and contentment.

"Dance enlivens the body.

"Dance engages the mind.

"Dance inspires the spirit.

"Dance celebrates cultural, social and physical diversity yet soars above perceived barriers to foster cohesion and shared understanding.

"Dance as an art represents society's highest aspirations and communicates profound truths that are beyond the power of words.

"Dance expresses the essence of what it is to be fully alive.

"For these reasons we advocate:

"Expanded opportunities to experience dance, as art, health, education, recreation or sport, whether as observer or participant, among all age groups and socio-cultural sectors.

"Wider appreciation of the multi-faceted contributions of the dance profession as a source of valuable knowledge and provider of inspiring performances.

"Broader acknowledgment of dance as a major component of our identity as a compassionate, imaginative, innovative and thriving community."

### WEST LINCOLN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I am proud to stand before you today in support of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital rebuild project. After years of promises and planning, the proposed Liberal budget will pull the plug on this much-needed upgrade, blindsiding many Hamilton and Niagara communities, including my own community of Stoney Creek.

I've heard from community members, patients, physicians and health care workers, who all agree that this decision is short-sighted and that Ontarians are getting shortchanged.

We need a long-term, efficient and sustainable health care system, precisely what this hospital rebuild represents. Instead of investing in vital services to improve the Niagara health care system, the Premier has chosen to invest in excessive salaries for hospital CEOs. These priorities need to change.

The Premier promised increased access to health care for the people of Hamilton and Niagara, who have already raised nearly \$14 million for their hospital rebuild only to have the provincial support reserved at the eleventh hour.

Our communities fear that this Premier will continue to gut this province of its essential services. On their behalf, I challenge the Premier to keep his promise, to continue the partnership and to rebuild the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I rise today to share the great news that our government is increasing funding for students in Peel region for the 10th year in a row.

Ontario's publicly funded education system is now ranked the best in the English-speaking world. Grants for students' needs will rise this coming year to more than \$11,000 per student. That is approximately an increase of \$4,000 per student since 2003.

The increased funding has led to significant achievements in the education system, including smaller class sizes; higher test scores in reading, science, math; higher graduation rates and help for underperforming schools.

Since 2003, our government has increased GSN funding by 51% to the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and an astounding 81.3% to Peel District School Board. Both of these boards are housed in my riding of Mississauga-Brampton South. That's great news, Speaker.

Our government's commitment to students in Peel region ensures that our students will continue to reach their full potential.

## VAISAKHI

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Starting April 14, over 100,000 of Ontario's Sikhs began celebrating Vaisakhi. This joyous celebration symbolizes that most significant day in 1699 when Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa.

Through the unification of the Sikh faith, Khalsa created a code of conduct and discipline for the faith. The code is based on values such as equality, honesty, justice, peace, courage and community service—values that all Ontarians cherish.

These principles have led the Sikh people to be some of the hardest-working Ontarians in the province, excelling in a variety of fields and consistently contributing to Ontario's development.

With your dedication to volunteerism and civic activism, your organization is a strong community leader. Your efforts embolden Ontario's heritage of cultural diversity and strengthen Canada's multicultural fabric.

On behalf of the Ontario PC Party, I'd like to welcome our guests to Queen's Park and wish the Canadian Sikh Association all the best as they continue to honour this valuable tradition in our province's heritage.

## VAISAKHI

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I take great pride in rising in the House today to honour the guests who have attended today and to invite everyone to the Canadian Sikh Association. We are celebrating, as members of the Sikh faith, the birth of the Khalsa. It's a concept and a philosophy which advocates an extreme level of equality and justice for all. It's a unique path which advocates a level of understanding and brotherhood and sisterhood, which requires the benefit and the amelioration of all people, of

all nations, of all genders, races, creeds, religious backgrounds.

This celebration is celebrating the notion of social justice, advocated by the 10th guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who advocated a principle that we should rise in opposition of injustice against all people, regardless of their background, and it is imperative, as members of the human race, that we stand up for justice, we stand up for equality, and we fight for these rights in all our daily actions throughout our lives.

So I salute and I celebrate and I rise on this occasion of Vaisakhi, and I encourage everyone to participate in today's reception at 4:30 in the dining hall, where we will learn more about the Sikh heritage and about the birth of the Khalsa.

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## LEONARD BRAITHWAITE

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I stand here today to pay tribute to Leonard Austin Braithwaite, a true activist and champion of diversity, public service and civil rights, who died on March 28 of this year at the age of 88.

Mr. Braithwaite was born on October 23, 1923, in Toronto to West Indian parents, and he was raised in the Kensington Market neighbourhood. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1943 and proudly served his country with the VI Bomber Command in Yorkshire, England, during the final years of World War II.

After receiving his bachelor of commerce degree from the University of Toronto, Mr. Braithwaite received a master of business administration degree from Harvard Business School and later graduated as a lawyer from Osgoode Hall in 1958.

In 1963, the ambitious Braithwaite ran for the Liberal Party in the provincial election and became Ontario's first black member of provincial Parliament to win the newly created riding of Etobicoke. As an MPP, Leonard Braithwaite pushed to end racial segregation in our schools and also called for young females to serve as pages in this Legislative Assembly.

Braithwaite's honours include being appointed to the Order of Canada in 1997, being appointed to the Order of Ontario in 2004 and most recently winning the William Hubbard Award from the city of Toronto.

Leonard Braithwaite leaves behind a great legacy in our province, and on behalf of the residents of Don Valley East and all the members of Parliament in this provincial assembly, I'd like to honour him. Thank you.

PARRY SOUND AND AREA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDS

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I stand here today to congratulate each of the winners and nominees at last week's Parry Sound Area Chamber of Commerce President's Gala and Business Awards. The awards were held at the beautiful Stockey Centre overlooking Georgian Bay.

I had the pleasure of presenting the Tourism Award to the Anderson family and Island Queen Cruise. Founded



in the 1970s, Island Queen Cruise has since grown rapidly, commissioning ever-larger ships to accommodate the growing number of visitors who wish to explore the 30,000 Islands region of Georgian Bay.

Business of the Year went to Distler Construction for the second year in a row.

Entrepreneur of the Year was awarded to Stephanie Norrie of Applause Party Rentals.

For the Community Leadership Award, there were two winners: Susan Tait of Georgian Bay Women's Network and Barb Kerr of Investors Group financial services. Both have worked tirelessly building and leading community initiatives in Parry Sound.

Finally, the President's Award, which is awarded at the discretion of Andrew Ryeland, the president of the chamber, went to new business owner Stephanie Delaurier of Kudos Kuisine.

Each of these fine businesses and individuals has made remarkable contributions to their community and each demonstrates that the entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Parry Sound.

### CASSELMAN VIKINGS

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I'd like to take a moment to congratulate the Casselman Vikings, who are the Eastern Ontario Junior B Hockey League champions for the first time in their franchise history. The underdog Vikings recorded their second straight overtime win—4-3—over the Gatineau Mustangs on Thursday of last week to claim the best-of-seven series in five games.

The Eastern Ontario Junior B Hockey League was founded in 1966 as the Rideau-St. Lawrence Junior B Hockey League. Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of playing in that very league in the early 1980s—I know I don't look that old—for the Alexandria Glens. Although we came close to winning a championship, we never quite got there. So it's quite an accomplishment for this young team.

There are 22 member teams that play to compete for the D. Arnold Carson Memorial Trophy. To celebrate this big win, the town of Casselman will be proudly holding a parade this Sunday, April 22, at 3 p.m., at which I will be in attendance. The players and coaches will be able to display their well-earned trophy and their pride to the entire town of Casselman and surrounding areas.

So, félicitations à tous les joueurs et à l'entraîneur, Raymond Lavergne, qui a bien guidé son équipe, les Vikings, à la victoire.

Raymond Lavergne has quite a history as well as a successful coach guiding my former team, the Alexandria Glens, to a number of regional titles as well. He is well-accomplished and a great coach. I congratulate them all.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, communities in Nipissing are speaking out against the proposed fire sale by

this government of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. I have assured all groups that I will read their motions in this Legislature.

The townships of Bonfield and Chisholm have both passed motions endorsing the city of North Bay resolution, which calls on Premier Dalton McGuinty to honour his pledge and suspend the government of Ontario's plans to divest the assets of the ONTC in order to permit affected stakeholders, in the form of a community task force, time to devise a more thoughtful business case that will keep the ONTC whole, while respecting the stated goals of the northern growth plan, and, Bonfield and Chisholm go on to say, that the province of Ontario start to immediately transition responsibility for the ONTC from the MNDM to the Ministry of Transportation.

North Bay city council passed a further resolution this week noting that the multimodal transportation study started under this government's growth plan isn't sufficiently developed to fully understand the implications of divesting the ONTC, and that the decision to divest was unilaterally made by the province with absolutely no consultation with local government, aboriginal peoples, businesses or the provincially appointed northern advisory council.

Speaker, they request a meeting with the northern stakeholders, as requested in correspondence from the northern mayors.

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move its adoption.

**The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker):** Mr. Miller, Parry Sound—Muskoka, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption:

Your committee met on Wednesday, April 18, 2012, to consider the 2012 Special Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario on Ornge Air Ambulance and Related Services. During this meeting, the committee adopted a motion requesting that the House authorize the Speaker to issue his warrant for the appearance of Dr. Chris Mazza, former president and CEO of Ornge, before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts in room 151, Legislative Building, Queen's Park, Toronto, at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, May 16, 2012, and that, if necessary, the warrant can be served to Dr. Chris Mazza's attorney, Roger D. Yachetti, Q.C.

Your committee therefore requests that the House authorize the Speaker to issue his warrant, as provided in section 35 of the Legislative Assembly Act, requiring the appearance of Dr. Chris Mazza before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Miller presents the committee's report and moves its adoption. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Chris Mazza is a key person involved in the creation of Ornge air ambulance, and it's the committee's belief that it's important that he come and give testimony before the public accounts committee. For that reason, the committee has decided to ask for this Speaker's warrant.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent that the question on my motion for adoption of this report be put immediately without debate or amendment.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Miller has asked consent for his question to be put. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Miller, Parry Sound-Muskoka, has moved adoption of the report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, requesting a Speaker's warrant for the appearance of Mr. Chris Mazza. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Report adopted.*

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#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. Milligan assumes ballot item number 41, Mrs. Elliott assumes ballot item number 35, Mr. McNaughton assumes ballot item number 35, and Mrs. Elliott assumes ballot item number 60.

#### PETITIONS

##### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've been waiting for that particular order of the day. On behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, I'm pleased to present a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario regulation 319/08, public health inspectors are required to undertake risk assessments of small drinking water systems"—I'm happy that the Minister of the Environment is here listening;

"Whereas many of these small drinking water systems are located in homes," some "operating bed and breakfasts in rural Ontario;

"Whereas private homes that are the sites of bed and breakfasts already have potable drinking water used by the homeowners and their families every day;

"Whereas many of these bed and breakfasts have established the quality of their drinking water through years of regular testing;

"Whereas these home-based businesses are facing high costs" due to compliance with this new regulation, government regulation 319/08;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health amend Ontario regulation 319/08 to give the testing track record of a small drinking water system greater weight in the risk assessment process;

"Furthermore we, the undersigned, ask that bed and breakfasts operated within a private home with a drinking water" system meeting all regulations "of a private home not be subject to regulation 319/08" when tests have proven with no negative results.

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and present it to Brady, the page for my riding of Durham.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, this petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I have another 3,000 petitions to go with the many thousands I've already received.

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I agree with this and will sign my name to it, and Katarina will bring it down.

#### IMMIGRATION POLICY POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities."



"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

Je suis d'accord avec cette pétition; je vais la signer et vous l'envoyer par notre page législatif, Shaumik.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt;

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and Oak Ridges moraine;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries;

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt."

This is signed by members of my community who are particularly concerned. I have affixed my signature, as I am in favour of this, and want to give it to page Carley.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It is my pleasure to present this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately."

I proudly add my signature to these thousand and send it down with page Vincent.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of parents of the Avalon Public School in the riding of Ottawa—Orléans.

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the current enrolment of Avalon Public School is 687 students;

"Whereas the student capacity of the school is 495 students, as determined by the Ministry of Education's own occupancy formula;

"Whereas the issue of overcrowding and lack of space makes it impossible for Avalon Public School to offer full-day kindergarten until the overcrowding issue is addressed;

"Whereas Avalon Public School is located in a high-growth community;

"Whereas the enrolment at Avalon Public School is expected to continue rising at a rate of 10% to 15% a year for the foreseeable future;

"Whereas the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has made building a new school in Avalon a top capital priority;

"We, the undersigned, call on the province of Ontario and Ministry of Education to provide the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board with the necessary funding to build an additional school in Avalon, to open no later than September 2014."

I support this petition, and I send it forward with Gillian.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's Liberal government is forcing Ontario municipalities to build industrial wind turbines without any local say or local approval; and

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"Whereas the McGuinty government transferred decision-making power from elected municipal governments to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats; and

"Whereas Ontario's largest farm organization, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario have called for a suspension of industrial wind turbine development until the serious shortcomings can be addressed, and the Auditor General confirmed wind farms were created in haste and with no planning; and

"Whereas the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus has committed to restore local decision-making powers and to building renewable energy projects only in places where they are welcomed, wanted and at prices Ontario families can afford;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government restore local decision-making powers for renewable energy projects and immediately stop forcing new industrial wind developments on municipalities that have not approved them and whose citizens do not want them in their community."

I agree with this petition, and I shall sign it.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I agree with this petition, have affixed my name to it, and will submit it with page Jenny.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition here signed and addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which states:

"Whereas a progressive Ontario budget calls for bold and decisive deficit reduction action to ensure that Ontario remains the most attractive and competitive place in North America to set up or relocate a business, raise a family or build a career; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has introduced a budget that sets out a five-year deficit reduction, leading to a balanced budget by fiscal year 2017-18, while preserving Ontario's progress in infrastructure, health care and education; and

"Whereas the 2012-13 Ontario budget proposes \$4 of expense reduction for every dollar raised in new revenues, with such expense reduction including implementation of key recommendations in the Drummond report, eliminating overlap and duplication, and compensation restraint in the Ontario broader public sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the elected members of all parties support the comprehensive set of financial measures and expense reductions proposed in the 2012-13 Ontario budget to enable Ontario to balance its budget on schedule; enhance its world-leading position; and attract, build and retain the people, careers and companies to build a strong Ontario for generations to come."

I support this petition, and I affix my signature and send it with page Ranbir.

### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas a report from Ontario's Auditor General on the province's air ambulance service, Ornge, found a web of questionable financial deals where tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted and public safety compromised;

"Whereas Ornge officials created a 'mini-conglomerate' of more than a dozen private entities that enriched former senior officers and left taxpayers on the hook for" more than "\$300 million in debt;

"Whereas government funding for Ornge climbed 20% to \$700 million, while the number of patients airlifted actually declined by 6%;

"Whereas Ornge was paid \$7,700 per patient transported by land ambulance despite subcontracting this service for \$1,700 per patient, a full \$6,000 per patient less;

"Whereas, after receiving questions of serious concerns at Ornge from the opposition in 2010 and early 2011, the Minister of Health did not provide adequate



oversight, ignored the red flags and reassured the Legislature that all was well; and

"Whereas, on March 21, 2012, the Legislature voted to create a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals" at Ornge;

"Whereas such a committee provides protection from disciplinary action against employees who testify;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government of Ontario immediately appoint a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals" at Ornge.

I agree with this petition and I will be signing it.

### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this really short petition from the people of Sudbury and Nickel Belt.

"Whereas a company's resumption of production with replacement workers during a legal strike puts undue tensions and divisions on a community; and

"Whereas anti-replacement legislation in other provinces has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes";

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario "to enact legislation banning the use of replacement workers during a strike."

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask my little page Ranbir—not too sure how to pronounce the name; we'll learn, though—to bring it to the Clerk.

### IMMIGRATION POLICY

#### POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I certainly support this petition and will sign it—and will offer the member from Trinity–Spadina an opportunity, as he seems to be indicating his enthusiasm—and send it to you via page Vincent.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The time for petitions has expired.

Orders of the day.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to revert to motions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The government House leader has sought unanimous consent to return to motions. Agreed? Agreed.

### MOTIONS

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 35 be waived.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Bradley has moved that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 35 be waived. Agreed? Agreed.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### ONTARIO FORESTRY INDUSTRY REVITALIZATION ACT (HEIGHT OF WOOD FRAME BUILDINGS), 2012 LOI DE 2012 SUR LA REVITALISATION DE L'INDUSTRIE FORESTIÈRE DE L'ONTARIO (HAUTEUR DES BÂTIMENTS À OSSATURE DE BOIS)

Mr. Fedeli moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 with respect to the height of wood frame buildings /  
Projet de loi 52, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment en ce qui a trait à la hauteur des bâtiments à ossature de bois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Speaker. It's my great pleasure to be introducing this bill on behalf of the forestry industry and on behalf of all of northern Ontario.

Forestry, as you know, is a vital part of the northern economy, and it has been hit hard over the past decade. Over the past several years, some 60 lumber mills have closed across the north and 10,000 resource-sector jobs have disappeared.

It's my hope that this bill will help reverse the damage that has been done and help kick-start a revival in the forestry sector of northern Ontario.

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Back on March 20, I was pleased to be joined at my news conference here at Queen's Park to introduce my bill by Mr. Jim Lopez, president of Tembec, one of Canada's premier forestry companies; Mr. Michael Giroux, president of the Canadian Wood Council; and Marianne Berube, Ontario executive director for Wood WORKS!

We have worked very closely for a long time with the industry to develop this legislation. For that reason, it does not promote the use of one construction material over another, but rather focuses on the tangible benefits this change could offer to all of Ontario.

The Ontario Forestry Industry Revitalization Act is an act to amend the Ontario building code to permit wood frame multi-use buildings to be constructed up to six storeys instead of the current four storeys. This seemingly small change could provide a tremendous boost to the forestry industry by increasing domestic demand for Ontario lumber, supporting 200,000 jobs and stimulating 103 forestry-dependent communities.

With the national building code updates not coming until 2015, that means the Ontario code won't be updated until 2017. This bill, Bill 52, will then fast-track that process. My bill will also allow Ontario to respond to lower export demand for its softwood lumber and stimulate the forestry sector in the north by creating tariff-free local markets.

Ontario's softwood lumber industry is reliant on the housing sector, with between 60% and 70% of provincial production being currently exported to the United States. But with Ontario's population projected to rise by nearly 35% by 2036, the demand for more higher-density, multi-family residential buildings will continue to increase.

Market experts estimate that the mid-rise sector could represent 8% to 10% of the entire multi-storey market in Ontario in the next 20 years, up from 3% today. This bill will give wood frame mid-rise buildings an opportunity to help meet that demand.

As well, through the growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe and the Places to Grow Act, Ontario and almost all municipalities are committed to reducing urban sprawl. By 2015, at least 40% of all residential development in the greater Golden Horseshoe must be built on land already designated for residential or commercial use. By making construction of mid-rise structures 12% to 15% more affordable, wood frame buildings

will allow municipalities to build up instead of out and to adopt higher densification policies.

The proposed building code changes also include proven fire safety measures which ensure that wood frame buildings will perform as well as or better than buildings permitted under the current version of the code.

British Columbia is already seeing the benefits of changes to allow more wood construction in their mid-rise buildings. B.C. enacted their Wood First Act in 2009 and fast-tracked changes to its building code in 2009—it took them nine months, that's all—to allow wood frame construction up to six storeys. Since then, 11 projects have been completed or are under construction; 98 are at the design, permit or construction stage; and the B.C. government themselves have recently issued a request for proposals for a 10-storey wood frame building.

On a market scale, introducing a wood frame option has made building mid-rise structures considerably more cost-effective.

The increased consumption of lumber brought about by this bill will stimulate Ontario's forestry sector in response to the economic weakness and decreased demand from the United States. Bill 52 will create jobs and growth in northern Ontario communities dependent on forestry, while reducing construction costs, and help southern Ontario meet targets to reduce urban sprawl. Wood frame construction will also reduce the carbon footprint and increase the energy efficiency of mid-rise buildings. Speaker, this is a win-win-win-win.

At its board meeting last week, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, FONOM, which represents 110 municipalities, towns and cities in northeastern Ontario, passed the following resolution in support of Bill 52. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities has previously gone on record as supporting a change in the building code such as that contained in this bill;

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that the FONOM commits its support to this proposed legislation; and

"Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to the member of provincial Parliament for Nipissing."

In addition, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, NOMA, has backed my Bill 52. In a letter from President Ron Nelson, he states, "We thank you for your support of the forestry industry in Ontario, and we offer our full and unreserved support to this legislation which we trust will be unanimously supported by members of the Ontario Legislature."

In addition, the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce has expressed support for Bill 52. In addition, the chamber says it will bring forward a resolution to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, which reads as follows:

"That the Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the government to give its full support for the proposed changes to the Ontario building code regarding the use of wood in mid-rise construction, and urge that the proposed



changes be incorporated into the revised edition of the Ontario building code.”

Their e-mail to me goes on to say, “We applaud your bill, which will make the necessary changes to the current Ontario building code.”

Speaker, as you can see, my bill has broad support across northeastern and northwestern Ontario and from the important industrial forestry partners.

As you’re aware, the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan will bring forward a very similar bill this afternoon. Sadly, it’s an attempt by the Liberals to boast that they love Ontario’s lumber industry even more than us because this bill mandates the use of wood in provincially funded buildings—this despite closing most of northern Ontario off from development through their Far North Act.

In a fashion typical of the government, they’ve created a bill that increases regulations and unnecessarily interferes in the construction sector. In short, they’ve taken a great idea from our caucus and made it complicated, while using it as an opportunity to add red tape to the bureaucracy. In fact, it does the one very thing the industry told me in all of my extensive consultations on my Bill 52 they did not want to see, and that was a requirement to favour wood over other construction material.

It would also increase regulations by requiring builders working on a provincially funded project to submit a report to the minister in accordance with the regulations that demonstrate that the building will be constructed using wood as the primary building material. More troubling is the new authority the minister will have, including the ability to recommend best practices and to “advise on the form and content of agreements and other arrangements respecting the design or construction of provincially funded buildings.”

Speaker, it’s clear that this additional regulatory burden will increase the cost and construction time for these taxpayer-funded projects.

The goal should be to reduce red tape regulations and the seemingly endless list of approvals that are major issues in the construction sector. Instead, their bill, which we’ll hear shortly, comes up with new ways to add to these problems. That said, this issue is critically important to our forestry industry, and this legislation should be viewed in that context.

In closing, Bill 52 promotes the use of wood in construction, but does so without increasing the regulatory burden and the government’s control over the private sector. It is my hope that members of all political stripes, especially my fellow colleagues from northern Ontario, will see the merits of Bill 52 and support it in the Legislature today so it can receive proper scrutiny at committee.

1350

I come from the city of North Bay in the riding of Nipissing. We have 66 manufacturing companies within our community. My riding includes the town of Mattawa and the municipalities of Powassan and Trout Creek,

both heavily dependent on the wood sector. We have seen Mattawa be devastated by various things that the government has done, including the Far North Act and Bill 151, the forest tenure act. Those have been so harmful to all northern Ontario communities, especially the hard-hit community of Mattawa, where the men and women from Mattawa need to go out to the Alberta oil sands to find work, and the families are left with one parent at home.

This is an opportunity to bring back the forestry sector, bring life back to those 103 communities like Mattawa, like Trout Creek, like Powassan, that are dependent on the forestry sector. This is an opportunity for those 10,000 resource-related jobs that have been lost throughout northern Ontario and those 60 communities that have been devastated by the loss in the forestry sector.

Speaker, my bill, Bill 52, is supported by FONOM, supported by NOMA and especially supported by the industry themselves, who have pushed so hard for this bill. I’m looking for unanimous support of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill 52, an act to amend the building code.

Some of you might not know that before I was an elected official to this Legislature, many, many moons ago I used to be a cut and skidder operator. I worked for an owner/operator for Cherokee Logging, and I also worked in a sawmill environment for Gogama Forest Products at various positions within the mill. So I come from the grassroots of the importance of what the forest industry means in northern Ontario. I’ve been part of the many, many communities that have been affected by this.

My family, along with many of my friends in the north, relies solely on the forestry industry. During my time working in the forestry sector, many of my friends lost their jobs due to the low demand for wood supply. I saw communities devastated by closures of sawmills, and I also became one of those statistics.

According to the CIBC World Markets report, when it comes to job losses and mill closures in Ontario, Ontario has the worst reputation across Canadian provinces. The Ontario Forestry Coalition has reported that since 2002, the forest industry has shed 10,000 direct jobs and as many as 40,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Without the appropriate public policies in place, the loss of jobs and economic prosperity is likely to continue. Failure of this government to act and to protect the forestry sector will impact sustainable economic development for communities across northern Ontario, including members of First Nations who are looking to forestry as a means to improving the economic standings of their respective communities.

In my riding, we have several mills which are operating at lower capacity, experiencing job losses and, in some unfortunate cases, have complete closures. In my riding alone, Weyerhaeuser mill in Wawa: 160 jobs lost;

mill closed. Domtar closed in White River; approximately 236 jobs lost. They also temporarily closed their operations in Nairn Centre, and many still continue to be affected. Dubreuilville Forest Products: This community was built on the bones of three brothers who stood together to build this community; 400 direct jobs were lost there and countless indirect jobs were lost there. The mill is still closed today. The Domtar sawmill in Chapleau: The mill closed. Tembec is running in Chapleau; however, they've had 140 employees who have experienced layoffs and are under threat of job loss due to some fibre supply issues, so there are big concerns there. The Midway mill in Thessalon: The lumber mill is surviving; however, almost 200 permanent jobs were lost there.

If I look here, there are 48 mills that I'm not even going to mention at this point in time. So the list goes on and on, and I've only mentioned—these are just sawmills. There are many other jobs associated with this industry that are experiencing job loss. My staff and I spoke to some loggers last night who can't find a contract, or the contracts, the ones that are offered to them, they just can't do them because they're offered below operating costs. We have folks working in the trucking companies who transport to these mills, and they too are losing their jobs at staggering rates, not to mention the recent increases to commercial licensing fees.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wish I could be optimistic that this bill will improve the economy for northerners working in the forestry sector and I do want to believe that it will. However, this is one small step. Obviously, we need to address the high cost of electricity as well.

People in the north are not impressed. Day to day, we have policies which disproportionately disadvantage northerners. It's about time this government stood up for northern Ontario workers and made policies to improve the economy in the north, not destroy it. Many other provinces and countries have developed wood-first strategies. It's time we recognize and assist the forest industry after many, many years—too many years—of neglect.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** I'm pleased to join in this debate. It's kind of an unusual afternoon because we've got Bill 52 before us, which we're debating right now, and later we've got Bill 61, a similar bill which has got some additional provisos in it. While I do understand the reason for the member from Nipissing bringing forward this bill, I suggest that the House take a close look at the member from Nipissing's bill and the bill from the member from Thunder Bay, Bill Mauro, which is Bill 61. These two bills are very, very similar but there are very subtle differences.

I've read over carefully and thought carefully about the member from Nipissing's bill. Of course, his bill raises the building height limit from four to six storeys for a wooden building, and it's surprisingly close to the bill brought by the member from Thunder Bay.

I know the member from Thunder Bay has been working on this issue for months and months and months.

He's been a member here since 2003, and I remember talking to him in past years about this issue. So it's surprisingly strange, when the member from Thunder Bay gave notice a while ago that he was going to bring this bill forward to increase the construction heights from four to six storeys to benefit and increase the demand for wood products in the north, that immediately upon the member from Thunder Bay introducing this bill, what happens? The member from Nipissing quickly jumps on the wagon and introduces his own bill, and now we've got this sort of odd situation where we've got essentially two bills dealing with the same issue on the same afternoon. But I have taken the advice of the member from Thunder Bay, who is intimately involved with these issues and has been a champion of this cause for several years now, since I've known him in this Legislature.

So what are the differences in the two bills? You have to keep in mind that they're very, very subtle, but here are the concerns that you've got to keep in mind and why these concerns are really a criticism of Bill 52, which does not go as far as Bill 61.

So what are the two core issues here?

Well, number one, there's a concern about the time frames contained in Bill 61, the bill put forward by the member from Nipissing. I think, reading the bill through and making my own professional inquiries from people in the safety industry and in the lumber industry, that he's rushing a little too fast here. If we're going to pass a bill allowing construction from four to six storeys and using lumber products, there are a number of safety issues and building code issues, and especially issues that the firefighters of Ontario have raised.

**1400**

It's no secret that in wooden structures, there's a higher risk factor of fire and the like. Bill 61, put forward by the member from Thunder Bay, has got a different set of time frames involved in it so that these safety concerns can be addressed and we can make sure that we get it right.

We want two things here: We want the increased use of lumber in construction, and we want to do it in the safest possible way. Those things have to be married together, and that will achieve two things: That will help our economy, and it will do it in a way that has the most safety we can get for people who are using those residences and for people who have to deal with safety issues that may arise under various building code requirements, and particularly our provincial firefighters who may have to attend to these safety issues.

The second big difference in the two bills is—and this is also very, very important—that Bill 61 goes much farther than Bill 52, in that it requires, here in Ontario, that all publicly funded buildings use and increase their wood construction in those buildings. That's a huge one-up, if you will, on Bill 52. Bill 52 leaves it up to private sector buildings; they can optionally use lumber. The member from Thunder Bay has taken it a step further and required that all publicly funded buildings in Ontario increase and use wood construction. That's a huge boost for the lumber industry.



The member from Nipissing made reference to his time as mayor and how he has been interested in this issue of wood construction and so on, and I do understand that. I just want to take this moment to thank the member from Nipissing for being such a great supporter of our provincial FIT program. I understand that when he was the mayor, up until his election here to this chamber, he was instrumental in seeing that the city hall in North Bay installed solar panels on their roof. I'm glad that he did that, but I find it strange that he sits opposite during the rest of the time and is critical of the FIT program.

I'm also wondering whether the member opposite, rather than sort of jump on the bandwagon of Bill 61 that Mr. Mauro from Thunder Bay has introduced and trying to sort of crowd him out for the credit there, as a member from Nipissing and a proponent over the last number of days since we introduced the budget—and he's been highly critical of our plans for the Ontario Northland Transportation, or what's affectionately known as the ONR—why he hasn't, on his own initiative, introduced a private member's bill to make sure that the ONR is kept. I'd just make that observation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** It's my pleasure today to stand here and speak in support of Bill 52, the Ontario Forestry Industry Revitalization Act. Also, I'd like to take an opportunity to thank my colleague from Nipissing for tabling the bill when Ontario is in desperate need of creating jobs and revitalizing key economic sectors, especially in the north.

Bill 52 will directly contribute to Ontario's recovery and create more jobs. Forestry is a key component of our province's economy, and has been for well over 100 years. It's the second-largest industrial sector in Ontario, supporting 200,000 jobs and the livelihood of over 103 northern communities.

The Ontario forestry sector has been grappling with numerous disadvantages, among them the fact that the sector relies heavily on the US market. Between 60% and 70% of our wood is exported to the US. However, as a result of the downturn in the US housing market, the global recession and the US government's protectionist policies that aren't getting better, the forestry sector has been suffering from atrophy. In recent years, 60 lumber mills and over 45,000 forestry jobs have disappeared from this province.

Furthermore, the current Ontario building code put our lumber producers at a further disadvantage by limiting the height of wood frame buildings to four storeys. If this Legislature passes Bill 52, construction companies will be able to build wood frame buildings as tall as six storeys. The change to the building code will create tariff-free markets for Ontario wood and consequently stimulate the forestry sector, which badly needs it, and create high-quality, non-subsidized permanent jobs. We'll see thriving logging and lumber mill towns in northern Ontario once again, just like we have over the past century.

Bill 52 is a job creation strategy. I'm confident that all of my admirable colleagues here today, regardless of their political stripe, would agree with me that job creation is Ontario's top priority right now. I know it is in Barrie. While Ontario lags at the bottom of Confederation, Barrie actually has one of the lowest employment rates in Ontario and continues on that path. Therefore, it's important that we work together to pass this bill.

Bill 52 will create more affordable housing. First, the bill would help contractors build affordable homes faster. In British Columbia, contractors building six-storey wood frame buildings have realized an average of 12% to 15% savings compared to building steel and concrete buildings of the same height. Furthermore, contractors can erect a wood frame building in 70% of the time needed to construct a concrete building of the same height.

I know that the need for affordable housing is desperate in some communities, especially, I know, in my own community of Barrie, where there are over 5,000 families—not 5,000 people but 5,000 families—waiting for affordable housing, and in the past 10 years, there was only one affordable housing project that was implemented in Barrie, in my own ward. The fact that there has been only one in the past 10 years is deplorable. In a lot of cases, it's because of the lack of affordable materials. This would go a long way to help create more affordable housing, not just in northern Ontario but all over the province, and also help stimulate the building industry.

Bill 52 is presented in light of the success of the Wood First Act in BC. I'd like to argue that Bill 52 is an improvement on the Wood First Act, passed in British Columbia. The BC Wood First Act vitalized the forestry sector there by raising the height limit for wood frame buildings from four to six storeys. However, it has a severe downside. The law requires that all new provincially funded buildings be built using wood as the primary construction material. In each construction project, contractors use a wide range of building materials. It is up to the team of craftsmen, engineers, designers, contractors, accountants, lawyers and bankers involved in the project to determine which material is best suited for the job, in light of technical, environmental, economic and practical considerations.

I would like to argue that it is a flaw in the BC Wood First Act to allow politicians to severely limit professional contractors' freedom of design and of selecting the best-suited material. As a result, any gain made by the BC lumber industry is offset by losses incurred, for example, in the concrete and steel sectors. We don't want this to happen at the expense of any other economic sector. We don't want to take, you know, two steps forward only to take three back. That's not the point, and Bill 52 addresses this.

Those are the unfair provisions of the Wood First Act.

In contrast, Bill 52 is a fair bill. It takes the necessary steps to level the playing field for Ontario's wood sector by raising the height limit of wood frame buildings. At the time, it does not impose any limitation on profes-

sional contractors in terms of what material they can use. Thus, Bill 52 encourages competition and innovation without favouritism. Needless to say, Bill 52 is superior to any bill that plagiarizes the BC Wood First Act almost verbatim in a frankly pathetic attempt to buy the confidence of Ontarians with political gesturing.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to speak in favour of Bill 52, introduced by the member from Nipissing, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 with respect to the height of wood frame buildings.

As you all know, I represent the riding of Nickel Belt, a riding in northeastern Ontario where, for us, wood products mean forestry jobs. So I thought that I would read to you a list that I have read in this House before but I think it is worth repeating.

**1410**

It goes like this: Cascades, Thunder Bay, lost 375 permanent jobs; Abitibi-Consolidated in Kenora lost 350 permanent jobs; Norampac, the containerboard division from Red Rock, lost 300 permanent jobs; when Columbia Forest Products, the veneer plant, closed in Rutherglen, 63 people lost permanent jobs; Columbia Forest Products in Hearst closed, 76 permanent jobs; Weyerhaeuser, one paper machine and the wood room in Dryden, lost 115 jobs; Weyerhaeuser, the sawmill in Dryden, lost 385 permanent jobs; Weyerhaeuser in Sturgeon Falls, 125 permanent jobs lost; Excel sawmill in Opatatika, 76 permanent jobs; Domtar sawmill in Chapleau, 67 permanent jobs; Smurfit-Stone, the containerboard division in Thunder Bay, 100 permanent jobs lost; Temagami Forest Products in Temagami, 55 permanent jobs; Tembec in Smooth Rock Falls, 230 permanent jobs lost; Tembec in Mattawa, 111—hopefully those jobs will be recreated, but so far they're lost.; Tembec, Kapuskasing, 65 permanent jobs lost; Kruger, Longlac Wood Industries, in Longlac, 350 permanent jobs lost; Domtar pulp and paper in Espanola, 115 permanent jobs lost; Domtar sawmill in Nairn Centre, 140 permanent jobs lost; Devlin sawmill in Kenora, 30 permanent jobs lost; Patricia Logging in Dryden, 35 permanent jobs lost; Sturgeon Timber, 70 permanent jobs lost; Weyerhaeuser plant in Kenora, 41 permanent job lost; Bowater in Thunder Bay, 157 permanent jobs lost.

I could keep on and on like this, Mr. Speaker, rhyming off lists of sawmills that closed in northern Ontario and, if you were to keep track, you would count, just in my part of the northeast, 5,234 permanent jobs lost in the forestry industry in northeastern Ontario. Some of the examples that I give come from northwestern Ontario. So when I see a member from northeastern Ontario stand up, bring forward a bill that is balanced and that gives hope and opportunity, I speak in favour of this.

I didn't speak about Fryer Forest Products, in my riding, that is barely hanging on. Last week, Hydro came and turned the hydro off for unpaid bills because they're sitting with a tonne of wood and no buyers. The Home Depots of this world are not moving wood, so it sits in

his yard; tonnes of money sitting in his yard with no buyer.

This bill may give a little bit of hope to all of those 5,234 families who have lost their jobs in the forestry industry and who are looking to people like us, leaders in our communities, to give them a little bit of hope. I will be supporting this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate and speak to Bill 52, which is the bill that's being put forward by the member from Nipissing today.

Obviously, I don't come from a northern community, but from the years that I've spent here and from talking to my other colleagues from other communities around the province of Ontario, I certainly understand and appreciate the impact that forestry has, and the impact that it has on the Ontario economy.

Right from the outset, Speaker, let me tell you that I will be supporting this bill that's being put forward because I think it's one that allows us all to work together on issues that affect the province, whether you be from the north or from the south of this province. I think it's a good effort by the member to bring forward an idea. And quite often private members' bills are simply that: They're simply ideas that are brought forward because of what somebody's heard from a constituent, what you may have heard from a stakeholder, what you may have thought all along, maybe something that might make a piece of good legislation or maybe even a good addition to another piece of legislation. I think Bill 52 probably qualifies on a number of those fronts.

It's interesting that we do have two bills before us today that are very similar. I think both of them are seeking the same intent, and that is to ensure that the economy of northern Ontario remains one that is strong and one that is prospering and growing.

The bill we have before us—I know there will be some people who will say that they would not be in support of this bill, and I've heard from some of them. Some people are coming forward and saying that a six-storey building is too high for a building that's made primarily from wood; that it represents to them some safety concerns and that they would see it as a step backwards.

What happens if this bill were to pass today is that it would go on to committee and we'd hear from those groups, obviously. But we'd also be able to hear from those other people that I've heard from as well, who have told me that great strides have been made in this field and that you can now engineer buildings out of wood in a much more safe manner than you could in the past and that, I think, is something that we need to take into account.

So I will be supporting Bill 52 that we have before us. Bill 61, which is the next one up after this, which is the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan's bill, I think takes the good parts of Bill 52 and takes them a little bit further and actually talks about what the government could do to



increase its own usage of the wood products from our province. So I see the two bills as complementary.

I know that others have passed comment here today that I would not share or I would not associate myself with, that somehow these two members have ulterior motives. I see two members who are simply trying to support their own constituents and the industries in their constituencies.

Certainly, I sit next to the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan; I know we've been talking about these issues. I tell him about the problems that are facing Oakville; he tells me about the problems that are facing Thunder Bay. Mr. Fedeli and I will probably have a talk about North Bay at some point over the term, I'm sure. But I think that's how we get to understand the province better: by listening to each other. I know that I've talked, for some time, to the member from Thunder Bay about issues that face his community, and a lot of those issues are around forestry and are around the changing face of the forest industry on a global perspective, and what Ontario's role is in that.

So as those changes take place, there is always a role for government. Bill 52 I think speaks to that role and says that perhaps we ought to rethink something that we changed in the past. In the past, we limited the buildings to four storeys and that was with the old technology, that was with old wood, that was with the building practices of the day. What I believe the member is trying to tell the House today is that we may be able to move to six storeys. That is a common thread that we also see in Bill 61, that six storeys may be the new figure that we should be looking at in the future and that the rationale for that exists and that engineers and the engineering industry itself would be supportive of this in some manner.

So contrary to what we've heard from other people, I see the two bills as being very complementary. I applaud both members. I won't be speaking to the next bill, but I'll tell the member from Nipissing that I'm supporting his initiative and I would hope that he would support Bill 61 when it comes for passage.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak about Bill 52.

I must say, in regard to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, that I as well ran a cutter-skidder operation in my past life for a while and know what it's like to run a saw and everything else that's required. Mine was a small operation; I was an owner/operator. I was the number one supplier for a cedar mill and a red pine mill in southern Ontario, so I have a bit of experience in operating some of those aspects and know a little bit about that.

But you know, there's a lot more to this bill than just the building component. And yes, that is one of the key components that we're speaking about. Once upon a time, we had two-by-four construction in the province of Ontario; now we have two-by-six construction as a basis for many of the wood frame construction.

I know that the new member, the member from Nipissing—he was first elected, his first time around, in October of the past year, and within that time frame he's brought this bill forward. I know that there's posturing back and forth and I think that both members will agree that they'd be more than happy to work together, to work in the best interest of all the forestry sector in Ontario.

**1420**

Individuals need to realize—I know the member from Nickel Belt mentioned the number of jobs that were lost in so many places. But from a community such as southern Ontario and Oshawa, where I'm from, when you talk about losing 76 jobs, it's more a case of, "Oh, did they close a Lowe's or a Rona or a new Building Centre?" whereas in northern Ontario, it's the lifeblood of the north. The building sector and the forestry sector and the mining sector are the lifebloods of the north. That can represent entire small communities in northern Ontario, and their main substance for income is the forestry sector. When you lose those jobs, it has a huge impact, Mr. Speaker. I feel that it needs to be mentioned that it's a lot more than just the people working inside the mills, as well, if you look at all the cutters that are out there working in the bush, or the ones that are transporting the logs back and forth.

Most people don't realize that the number one cost in the operations is the energy costs involved in producing the lumber that's involved here, whether it's transporting it back and forth from the location where it's cut to the mills or it's the actual energy cost that's used inside those mills to be cost-effective, and that's one of the huge factors.

If we're able to, as mentioned, increase the number, about a 12% to 18% increase in wood sales as a result of this, I think it will be a huge benefit for Ontario as a whole. You'll see many of those sectors, not only inside the mills but all those support sectors around, whether it's the restaurants and the gas stations and everything else that takes place, the repair shops that take care of the trucks, and on and on and on, or the ones that maintain the roads—it's a whole separate industry, and it's hard for individuals in southern Ontario to gain that perspective. When you go cut the bush this way, you go cut through and you put in a new path, that's got to be maintained, Mr. Speaker. All that aspect of putting in that new road and everything that takes place there is very key for the development.

I can see this as moving forward. As I mentioned earlier on, once upon a time we had two-by-four construction in so many different ways. That two-by-four construction has now been replaced, basically, by two-by-six, and if you take that up, as other jurisdictions have—the example of British Columbia has been brought forward—that should be moving forward to Ontario as well.

The forestry sector has been substantially hit. We've heard from our members, our colleagues from the third party, about the number of mills that have been shut down in the province of Ontario.

I can recall another aspect, something else in Bill 61 that the member from Thunder Bay is going to be debating shortly after this, where he was talking about moving forward with government buildings as well. When I was given the privilege and honour to be the Minister of Natural Resources, it was in Thunder Bay at the Wood WORKS! event where I stood up and I announced at that time that all MNR buildings at that time, moving forward, would be all-wood-construction buildings in order to support that industry, because you can see it had such a huge demand in northern Ontario.

But also it's southern Ontario that benefits from the wood and the cost reductions that are brought forward by utilizing wood for these mid-range facilities. Anything that we can do to make life more affordable—simply the cost of gas. You only have to look at the cost of gas today, Mr. Speaker, as to the impacts on families. My sister-in-law is looking at downsizing her vehicle simply because she can no longer afford the gas in the vehicle that she was driving, and now is trying to find something more affordable. Affordable life in so many different aspects—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** What was that? I missed the member from Peterborough's comments.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Chevrolet Volt.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Oh, the Volt. Yes.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Great product.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Yes, well, there are a number of General Motors—great crews and so many other ones that work. And yes, in Oshawa we're very dependent on General Motors, as it is in Peterborough. It used to be the number one employer but I think it's now—is it still the number one employer or number two now in Peterborough? We see how the industry—and the automotive industry is a comparator—benefits other communities like that of the member across the floor in Peterborough, and it's the same for the wood industry.

I can recall a mill being shut down in one community because the bureaucracy—and the member from Timmins—James Bay knows very well, because we worked on this issue—allowed the wood to be transported to another mill, unbeknown to the minister. Lo and behold, that individual lost his signing rights for any future impacts because of the impact not only on that, but on the cutters and everything else in the forest industry. We then met with the mayor at that particular time, where we continued to allow the cutting to take place, and the transport, because of all those jobs involved in that.

It's working together as an organization, and I know my colleague from Nipissing, as I mentioned earlier on, first came forward in October of this year. This is a key issue in supporting that sector. He's more than willing to work together with the member from Thunder Bay on Bill 61 to try and make this happen for the north, and anything that we can do as a government to move that file forward, to get those jobs in northern Ontario so that southern Ontario can receive those benefits, I think we should work toward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's my honour to stand here and speak in favour of Bill 52. I might not get a chance to speak about Bill 61, so I'd also speak in favour of Bill 61 at the same time.

Anyone from northern Ontario knows how important forestry is, and I'm proud to stand beside a member from northern Ontario who stands up for an industry in northern Ontario.

I don't say this for political reasons, but forestry is a big part of my riding, as is ONTC. I am a bit concerned when members from other parties in the north don't stand up for ONTC, because the extra cost of shipping the wood in and out might negate whatever happens in this bill.

Having said that, I truly hope that the members work together and the parties work together and make one bill that actually works, as opposed to what we're seeing with other bills where we're doing the posturing thing. In the end, the people in my riding, in Kirkland Lake, Larder Lake, Cochrane, French River or Englehart, don't see any benefit from what we're doing here. It's really important.

For those of you who have been here a long time, I think we could build six-storey buildings, but I'm not a building inspector, so I want to do whatever is safe. I also have cement plants in my riding. We do whatever works, okay? But let's do it.

The fact is, we have lost an awful lot of forestry jobs. Something no one has talked about yet—and I had this discussion with the member outside this chamber. In my riding, the trees are still getting cut, and then they go to Quebec and get processed. Neither of those two bills—we can still have the same thing happening: You cut the trees, they go to Quebec because hydro is cheaper, and then they come back here. So we could all be talking for nothing.

Having said that, I support both bills. I hope we can all work together to make one or two bills that work, and I hope we really talk about the issues that really, truly impact the north, because that's a big one. When I see the trees crossing the border and when I see the water spilling over the hydro dams, that hurts northern Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Nipissing, you have two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Speaker. First I'd like to thank the members from Algoma-Manitoulin, Willowdale, Barrie, Nickel Belt, Oakville, Oshawa and Timiskaming—Cochrane for standing up to speak.

It's evident that there is seemingly universal support for our bills—my Bill 52 and the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan's Bill 61. How we got here—I can tell you, I'm a new member. I've been here six months. When I go to visit the town of Mattawa and see the people who aren't working there, I know that something needs to be done in the forestry sector.

When the forestry industry approached me about two days after I was elected, I began working on my bill,



which turns out to be Bill 52, the Ontario Forestry Revitalization Act. I will honestly say to you, Speaker, that I had no idea that the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan had a similar bill under way. Had I known that, I would have sat with the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan and said to him, “Is there any way I can be involved to support your bill?” Unbeknownst that there was an additional bill, I have gone ahead and prepared Bill 52.

I am most eager to see something happen, whether it’s my bill, the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan’s bill or a joint bill. I think it’s universal. We need something to happen in the forestry sector. We’re so close here. I would absolutely hate to see both of them get blown up just for politics. I extend an opportunity to the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan to somehow—I’m not a legislator. I don’t know the technical points. I’ve only been here six months. I don’t know how we go from here to join them, but I am offering an opportunity to be able to work together with the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, who has obviously worked long and hard on his bill. I offer that now, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you very much. We will vote on this bill later.

1430

## ONTARIO’S WOOD FIRST ACT, 2012

### LOI DE 2012 PRIVILÉGIANT LE BOIS EN ONTARIO

Mr. Mauro moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 61, An Act to enact the Ontario’s Wood First Act, 2012 and to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 with respect to wood frame buildings / Projet de loi 61, Loi édictant la Loi de 2012 privilégiant le bois en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment en ce qui a trait aux bâtiments à ossature de bois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I appreciate the opportunity this afternoon to speak to my bill. It does two things, which I will go through quickly before I get into my remarks. The purpose of the act is to facilitate a culture of wood by requiring the use of wood as the primary building material in the construction of provincially funded buildings in a manner that is consistent with the Building Code Act, 1992, and there is contained in the bill an allowance for regulations to be formed in that regard.

The second piece I want to reference that the bill does—there are two themes here, basically: “The building code shall allow a building that is six storeys or less in building height to be of wood frame construction.” As well, this is the piece that has some sensitivity for some groups in the province. I want them to know that my private member’s bill that is being put forward here today does allow for an accommodation through regulation,

and they’re important enough that I want to read for people:

“For greater certainty, subsection (1)”—this is the part referring to the six-storey piece—“does not prevent the building code from,

“(a) imposing reasonable requirements on buildings of wood frame construction, including requirements relating to safety;” and clause (b) of that states, “prohibiting specified classes of buildings from being of wood frame construction.”

So without reading the whole bill, that’s specifically what it does.

The question then becomes, why is this necessary and why do we feel the need to do it? I want to speak to that a little bit. Most of us who have been around this place long enough know, or who have been from northern Ontario for long enough are aware, that the history of the forest industry has always been cyclical. It has always experienced significant ups and downs. But what happened over the course of the last seven, eight, nine years, and I think you could go back to the beginning of the new millennium—you could say the change that has occurred has been fundamental.

What occurred this time in the forest industry was not the same as what happened before, where we had the ups and downs and then it came back. What happened this time was completely fundamental. It was a major shift in what occurred. There are primarily two pieces to the forestry industry: sawmilling and pulp and paper. I’m speaking to why we feel this is necessary here today.

Speaker, what happened in this industry was incredibly dramatic. When we came to government here in 2003, the Canadian dollar was at 73 cents. The reason I need to put this on the record is that for seven years I listened to primarily the NDP blame the Liberals for the demise of the forest industry. It does not hold up to even the most superficial discussion or argument, and yet for five or six or seven years the NDP would continually criticize our government as somehow being responsible for the demise of the forest industry in northern Ontario and the loss of thousands of jobs. It was a ridiculous, it was a vacuous, it was an empty argument, and for five, six, seven years we listened to it. For those reasons, I will put some of these things on the record again as I have done in the past.

When we came to government, a 73-cent Canadian dollar—a year or two before that, when the Conservatives were in power, it was at 63 cents. For one pulp and paper mill in my riding, AbitibiBowater, now called Resolute Forest Products, one penny of appreciation in the value of the Canadian dollar represents a \$3-million expense to them on their bottom line—one penny. It went from 73 cents to \$1.10 at one point. It’s now around \$1. One cent of appreciation represents about a \$90-million to \$100-million expense on their bottom line. But the NDP primarily would tell you that it was somehow the Liberal government’s fault.

Now, AbitibiBowater had more than just one mill in Ontario; they had several mills in Ontario. That one cent,

for them, province-wide represented a \$15-million expense. But primarily the NDP wanted you to think that somehow the Liberals in Ontario were responsible for what happened in this industry.

Speaker, we weren't competitive. We've got the best tradesmen in the world in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario. I used to be one of them before I went back to university, and I can speak directly to the quality of work that we do. But do you know what? At the end of the day, if nobody is going to buy what you make, you've got a problem.

The member from Nickel Belt, in her remarks on the previous bill, just stood up and expressed her concern about a mill in her riding that just had the power turned off, and what did she say? They got the wood in the yard, but they've got no buyer. They don't have a buyer. She just made the point, right, Speaker? You could give them free energy; you could take the taxes off of their property tax; you could give them free water; you could cut labour costs in half, but if nobody buys what you make, you've got a problem, and that's a big part of also what happened to this industry. The US housing market collapsed. The member in the back row—I apologize; I don't have the riding at hand—from the Conservatives who spoke to the bill spoke to that, and I thank him for that. He said how most of the market is in the US, and that's the truth.

In my riding, the Buchanan sawmills, most of them—90% of his product was exported into the United States. Ninety per cent of it went to the US. We all know what happened to the US housing market: It collapsed. There are more houses for sale in the United States than there are houses in Canada. We all get a lot of stats around this place—more houses for sale in the United States than there are houses in Canada. So what does that do to the demand for wood products? I go back to the point the member just made. Yes, you can have lumber sitting in your yard and you can produce it as cheap as you want, but if there's nobody to buy your product, you've got a problem.

Speaker, Quebec, BC and Ontario are the three leading jurisdictions of forestry in the whole country. In Quebec and in BC, they lost more jobs in the forestry sector than Ontario did. If you talk to the NDP again, they're going to tell you that it only happened here and they're going to link the problems directly to the price of energy. They made a living off of that for six years. I say to them, as I said: The argument does not stand up to the most even superficial discussion. If it was as simple as that, why didn't a pulp and paper mill that was operating in Ontario transfer its capacity to Quebec or transfer its pulp and paper capacity to BC? Well, because they were closing there too; because it had nothing to do with electricity costs. It had to do with the decline of the housing market and it had to do with the decline and disappearance, to a large degree, of the newsprint market, or else they would have simply transferred their capacity, but they didn't do that.

Quebec, with their lower electricity costs, lost more jobs than Ontario. BC, with their lower electricity costs,

lost more jobs than Ontario. Ontario lost a lot of jobs, and we all know that the forest industry in Ontario took a kicking. But the suggestion, Speaker, that somehow that can be laid at the feet of this government as a result of electricity pricing is incredible.

I don't know where they get their 45,000 job number that they use all the time, because the number is actually—it's high, and a lot of people and a lot of families were affected, but it's more in the range of 10,000 to 11,000. They keep throwing 45,000 around. I'd like them to know—the member read a list. Maybe she can see if it adds up to 45,000 or not. I don't know.

Speaker, we have brought supports to this industry in a large way. Part of what we're doing here today is trying to help to create an environment for the use of more wood. That's something we can control, and that's something we should work together on, and that's something we should try and find a way to create a demand. But, Speaker, we have done lots over the past number of years that I want to reference.

Right now, in the last little while, the Resolute Forest Products mill in Thunder Bay has hired 100 people. A lot of people probably don't talk about that, but the sawmill there in Thunder Bay, associated with Resolute Forest Products, has hired 50 more people, so they're doing okay. They're hanging in there. We've given about \$10 million or \$11 million to Resolute Forest Products just about a year ago to create a cogeneration facility there. When that project is finished, they will take another 30% of their energy requirement away from having to buy it from the grid and they will generate it internally, meaning that 60% of their energy requirements will be generated internally. That cogen project, when it's finished, will lead to the creation of about another 50 jobs.

Currently in this budget—which, in three or four days, the NDP might stand and vote against, forcing an election, possibly—what we brought in to support the forest industry some time ago was the NIER program, the northern industrial energy rebate program. It's giving \$20 off per megawatt hour to the large industrial users in the province. We can impact that. They've still got some market. We've had that program in place for a number of years, as well as a significant number of other programs.

**1440**

We took back the cost, by the way, I should mention. We took back the cost of construction and maintenance of the primary and secondary forestry roads in the province of Ontario, a cost that was downloaded by the NDP in the early 1990s on to the backs of the forestry companies. It used to be a crown responsibility. In the early 1990s, the NDP downloaded it on to the backs of the forestry companies. We took that cost back. That was, I think, a \$225-million program over three years for the construction and maintenance of primary and secondary forestry roads in Ontario. There has been a lot that we have done in this regard to support this particular industry.

As I said before, in addition to that, I will mention one other thing. When we brought those supports in that we



could for the forestry industry as it existed—and there always will be the traditional industry there. There will always be sawmilling; there will always be pulp and paper to some degree. But we realized that if we wanted the industry to flourish in northern Ontario, we had to look for different products from our historical wood basket.

We brought into play an organization called CRIBE. CRIBE stands for the Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio-Economy. We put \$25 million into that particular program. We worked very hard. We got the CRIBE head office established in Thunder Bay. Through CRIBE, we are doing a lot of good work at finding out what we can extract from the traditional wood basket in terms of creating new products in northern Ontario. CRIBE has had some successes. There is quite a cool lab constructed at the Resolute Forest Products mill in Thunder Bay. Ph.D. students from the university working there are seeing what new products they can extract from the traditional forest basket.

So Speaker, this private member's bill that I've brought forward today is trying to control the things that we can control. It's not about pretending that if you lower the price of electricity by two cents, somehow you're going to find a buyer for a product that there is no market for. We can't control that. What we can do is help where we can help.

Through this private member's bill, the attempt is to create some market internally here in Ontario to generate some demand for that product as well as moving off in a new direction on the work that we're doing through CRIBE that I've just described—\$25 million to try and generate, in addition to the traditional products that we produce, new wood products that we can get from our wood basket that will create high-end, well-paying, value-added jobs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I rise today to speak to Bill 61, the Ontario's Wood First Act, the purpose of which is to amend the Building Code Act to allow for wood frame construction in mid-rise buildings up to six storeys instead of the current four storeys. It sounds so familiar. I'm having a déjà vu moment.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Just use the same notes.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I almost will use my same notes.

I'd like to take some time, Speaker, and address how we got here in terms of the severely depleted state of the forest industry in Ontario and why legislation allowing for six-storey wood frame construction could be a tremendous boost for the sector at this point in time. No one will argue that the forestry industry, not just in Ontario but across Canada, was hurt during the softwood lumber dispute of the past decade. However, policy decisions over the past nine years have continued to take chop after chop out of the trunk of the industry that is so vital to so many northern Ontario communities.

The forestry sector supports some 200,000 jobs in Ontario in more than 100 forestry-dependent commun-

ities. In fact, there are 103 forestry-dependent communities, especially in northern Ontario. Unfortunately, we've seen 60 lumber mills close across northern Ontario, which has resulted in the loss of some 10,000 resource sector jobs and thousands more indirect jobs.

Speaker, why is this and why has this happened? One of the key reasons is the decisions related to energy costs. We know that from 2008 until 2010, energy costs rose 26% in Ontario and will rise another 46% by 2015. That's a statistic that the Auditor General gave us in November. Indeed, energy costs are one of the largest inputs for forestry operators and mill operators. Incidentally, it's also one of the largest inputs for mining operators, as we have heard loud and clear from Xstrata Copper, formerly of Timmins, Ontario, as they left Ontario to move to Quebec for cheaper energy. Sadly, we've seen mill after mill shutter across the north.

In addition to that, we've also seen the Far North Act, which makes half of northern Ontario a virtual museum by closing off the north to development. I've stood and talked about that many times in this Legislature, the Far North Act, which not only affects forestry but mining. I have said it before and I will say it one more time: Had the Far North Act passed only a short time earlier, we would never have seen the Ring of Fire be discovered.

Nonetheless, that brings us to today and the need to look at creative solutions to help our battered forestry industry. That's why, while sitting as the mayor of the city of North Bay and now as the MPP for Nipissing, I have discussed with the wood construction industry on many, many occasions for many years now ways we could work together to stimulate activity in the forestry sector. Some of those thoughts have culminated in the creation of my own Bill 52, which we heard about a half-hour ago.

Make no mistake, Speaker: There is a need for the building code amendment to allow construction in buildings up to six storeys. I think that's something you've seen all of our parties are agreeing on today. I'm going to repeat one of the statistics: With Ontario's population projected to rise by nearly 35% by 2036, the demand for more high-density, multi-family residential buildings will continue to increase. Market experts estimate that the mid-rise sector could represent 8% to 10% of the entire multi-storey market in Ontario in the next 20 years, up from 3% today. My bill—let me reword it to “these bills”—will give wood frame mid-rise buildings an opportunity to help meet that demand.

As well, through the growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe and the Places to Grow Act, almost all municipalities are committed to reducing urban sprawl. By 2015, at least 40% of residential development in the greater Golden Horseshoe must be built on land already designated for residential and commercial use. Speaker, they're not making land any further. By making construction of mid-rise structures 12% to 15% more affordable, wood frame buildings will allow municipalities to build up instead of out and to adopt higher densification policies.

The proposed building changes include proven fire safety measures which ensure that wood frame buildings will perform as well as or better than buildings permitted under the current version of the code.

As you've heard from all parties, British Columbia is already seeing the benefits of changes to allow more wood construction in mid-rise buildings. BC enacted the Wood First Act in 2009 and fast-tracked the changes to their building code in 2009 to allow wood frame construction up to six storeys. Since then, 11 projects have either been completed or are under construction, 98 are in the design, permit or construction stage, and the BC government has recently issued a request for proposal for a 10-storey wood frame building. On a market scale, introducing a wood frame option has made building mid-rise structures considerably more cost-effective.

Speaker, if any of that sounds familiar to what I said about a half-hour ago, it should, because they're very similar words I used in promoting my own bill as I am in speaking to Bill 61.

But something that I heard very loud and very clear in my consultation was this: The wood construction industry does not want legislation that favours the use of one construction material over the other. They believe, and I believe, that because use of wood can and has proven to actually reduce construction costs, the market itself can and will determine that greater and more extensive use of wood in mid-rise construction makes economic sense.

That's where our bills differ, but at the end of the day, the residents of northern Ontario aren't interested in differing over wording of one or wording of another. They know that we are in trouble north of Steeles Avenue and that we have men and women who are sent down here from the north, and this is an opportunity for us to work together on a bill that can satisfy the demands of northern Ontario. We've got an opportunity here, Speaker, to be able to do something positive for the north. All parties have spoken in favour of the bill, in terms of trying to do something for northern Ontario's forestry sector—we all called it "the beleaguered forestry sector." We know that a six-storey building is going to use a tremendous volume of wood that is not already being used. We have an opportunity here, and it's my hope that members of this House will listen to the advice of NOMA, FONOM, the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce and the wood construction industry and vote in favour of this bill this afternoon.

1450

Let me stress again: The building code amendment could be a vital boost to a battered forestry industry. It is important to northern Ontario that this proposed change, the six-storey building change that we're all talking favourably about, will at least have a chance to be debated at committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I rise today to speak on Bill 61, Ontario's Wood First Act, as proposed by my northern colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. If I was a cynic,

I'd question the member's motivation for introducing this bill, which is aimed to help the forest industry, when not too long ago he suggested that people in the forest industry need to just basically deal with it and move to Alberta like everybody else. But I'm not that much of a cynic. Needless to say, those comments didn't go over too well in northwestern Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I am trying very hard to do my best to work with all parties—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, come to order, please.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'm doing my very best to work with all parties and all members to achieve positive results for my riding, I'll tell you, but it's comments like those, like the comments that were made not too long ago by the member opposite, that make it very difficult. Again, I do question his motivations when he makes those comments.

So, as a proud northerner, I firmly believe that we need to work together to move the region forward, and it's for that reason that I'm proud to offer my support for this bill. I certainly hope that my northern colleagues will join me in supporting our region's tourist information centres and making sure that they remain open.

As we know, there are four main industries in my region. There's forestry, which has been on the downswing; tourism; mining, which we're hoping will grow; and spinoff industry that's created from the combination of these three. Of course, as little as 10 years ago, one could make the argument that forestry was the primary driver of our northern economy, but that simply isn't the case anymore, although we do remain hopeful that the forest industry will rebound and we can return to our past economic prosperity.

The first thing that I want to address with this bill is the fact that this bill is very similar to the bill that was introduced previously by the member for Nipissing, but I'm not going to get bogged down in a chicken-and-egg discussion about whose bill came first. The point is that we're getting support from all sides of the House. Like my colleague from Nipissing did say, it seems that everybody is speaking in favour, so I'm hoping that when these two bills go forward to committee, we're able to come up with something that really combines the best of both.

As somebody who did work in a sawmill myself to help put myself through school, I know the importance of the forest industry. It's a shame that the mill that I worked in to put myself through school is no longer open, so that other students are no longer able to find that good-paying job and put themselves through.

I would like to take few minutes to point out some of the shortcomings of this bill. The most obvious is the omission of the word "Ontario" in front of "Wood." Aside from the title of the bill, which is Ontario's Wood



First Act, there is nothing in the bill that actually requires that Ontario wood be used in any of the structures that it talks about. So there's no guarantee that having this requirement will actually benefit our forest industry in northern Ontario.

During the election, my party proposed a very strong buy-Ontario policy for government operations, a policy that makes a lot of sense. Ontario taxpayer dollars should be used, where possible, to encourage Ontario industry. Food purchased by the Ontario government for government functions should be Ontario food. Wood used for buildings should be Ontario wood. Vehicles purchased by the government should be vehicles made in Ontario. We ask our constituents to shop local and I firmly believe that we, as politicians and as a government, should lead by example.

We, as legislators, need to be active participants and, again, we need to lead by example. If there's one thing I'm proud of from my election campaign, it's that all of my materials were produced in my riding: the signs, the bumper stickers, the magnets, the flyers, all produced there. And it turned some heads because it opened up some markets for some of the very good quality materials that are produced in northwestern Ontario and it allowed those products to be showcased. It's my hope that we can do the same thing with the wood that's produced in our province.

That brings me to another suggestion that I'd like to make. Requiring wood to be the primary construction material is a good start but I think that we could go one step further and make it just a little bit better by encouraging that all secondary and additional materials, where available, come from Ontario as well—for example, granite. We have some thriving granite operations in our province and it's my understanding that granite from my riding was used to help build the presidential library in the United States, so I don't see any reason why we wouldn't be able to use these products in our own facilities as well.

As I've said, I do like the buy-Ontario spirit this bill seems to be championing, at least in the title, but I do find it troubling that there isn't anything further that would require Ontario wood to be used. Let's face it, the single biggest thing that a wood procurement policy could do would be a buy-Ontario-wood policy. But this bill doesn't include that. It doesn't go that far.

In order to help the industry, we have to make many changes provincially, including changes to the province's wood tenure act and allowing communities and not companies to have control of their wood supply. This would ensure that our resources are used to create jobs rather than have resources exported to other regions. This bill is a good first step and I hope my colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan and all my northern colleagues will work together to make positive changes that will allow us to move forward.

I thank the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan and the member from Nipissing for bringing both of these bills forward, and I hope that they both receive speedy

passage so that we can start rebuilding our once prosperous forest industry.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to lend support to my colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan on Bill 61, Ontario's Wood First Act.

I want to just highlight a couple of aspects of this member's work because he has been a long-standing member of the Legislature and has worked tirelessly on behalf of his constituents—to highlight a number of important issues.

As some members of the Legislature are aware and others may not be aware, I want to reference a couple of points. Mr. Mauro, the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, promoted greater access for PSA screening for prostate cancer for men in the province of Ontario. That was a measure that was adopted by our government. It is now, with a referral from your physician, provided through OHIP coverage, which is a fantastic addition to the OHIP system—and certainly recognize the importance of that.

He also helped to deliver an important angioplasty program to northwestern Ontario. He's fought for a law school at Lakehead University. He's also helped to bring new infrastructure and new programs to his community. He has fought for a buy-Ontario-first program when it came to mass transit, adopted as well, and it supported thousands of jobs in the community of Thunder Bay with respect to the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay. It certainly speaks to his commitment to his community, to his commitment to the province of Ontario and making our province a better place.

There were comments made earlier by the member from Kenora–Rainy River referring to Mr. Mauro suggesting that individuals losing their jobs in the forestry sector should somehow leave the province. Nothing could be further from the truth. This individual, in my estimation, has been a tremendously tireless advocate for the forestry sector and I would love to see that. So I'm happy to lend my support again to Bill 61.

**1500**

I also want to highlight a couple of other measures that we've taken, certainly over the last number of years, in respect to the downturn that has taken place in the forestry sector. We all recognize that the significant economic downturn that we face, that took place in the forestry industry, occurred before 2008. Our government took some fairly dramatic steps to put in place programs that would be effective in helping to support the forestry sector. In fact, in total, we introduced a program valued at about \$1.1 billion; it was the largest forestry aid package in the history of the province—and the NDP voted against it. This program, the forestry sector prosperity fund—uploading of the roads program that was downloaded by the NDP, and the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan has highlighted that—over \$200 million; an additional \$10-million program to highlight the wood inventory program that was needed by the government to

ensure we had adequate resource inventory under our watch with respect to the forestry sector. So, Speaker, there were a number of measures that were taken by our government over the last number of years to help support the forestry sector.

The fact of the matter is that the largest individual factor affecting the downturn in the forestry economy was the rapid rise in the Canadian dollar. I certainly, in talking to forestry sector folks in my community, recognize that that was the case. You heard the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan highlight the example in his riding of the millions of dollars in losses that it represented with the dollar moving north in our community. We had a mill, a vibrant part of the economy—the reality was that every time the dollar moved up one cent, they lost \$1.5 million. The cumulative effect from about 65 cents to 90 cents or so, thereabouts, was estimated in the \$40-million range—a huge impact to any business, an impact that has negatively affected and tremendously affected so many of our forestry businesses.

So what I see in the member here bringing this bill forward today is his continued commitment to fight for northern Ontario jobs, northern Ontario businesses and in particular the forestry sector. And to highlight some of those key features, the member, in Bill 61, is calling for an amendment in the Ontario building code from four to six storeys to allow construction. He's also requesting that there be priority in the provincial funding of buildings that, where possible, wood be used; and also, and importantly, in this piece of legislation that's being proposed, is that we ensure that there are adequate and appropriate safeguards with respect to the safety standards. We'll work with the Ontario firefighters' association, firefighter organizations across the province, to ensure that we get it right with respect to safety standards. No one in this province, no one in this Legislature wants to see safety standards compromised in any way with respect to this legislation, and the member has quite correctly highlighted this aspect as part of his bill.

I see this bill in respect to the forestry sector as somewhat of a stimulus package or a stimulus support for the forestry sector in addition to some of those measures that we've been taking over the last number of years. And it's appropriate to take these steps, where possible, within existing trade regulations. The member from Kenora–Rainy River said, "Well, look, I don't see it's got to be Ontario wood." The reality is that we all respect the free trade agreement; we respect the softwood lumber agreement. We have to work within these international parameters and guidelines. It would be nice to do that, but the member also needs to recognize that there are other businesses in Ontario that rely on those agreements and would be retaliated against by other jurisdictions. That's a reality and you could be compromising jobs in our province by suggesting that. We need to make sure that we're doing this within the existing legislation and international regulations that govern our industry and our sector.

Speaker, it's very clear that the proposal has merit with respect to the province of British Columbia. They

passed legislation in 2009 highlighting the change from four to six storeys, amending their building code, and we have seen the benefits of that. There are other provinces as well, if I could take a moment to highlight that. In BC, they've seen 104 mid-rise building projects in addition as a result of this legislation. Quebec has implemented a wood use strategy seeking to increase the use of wood. New Brunswick announced, in the fall of 2010, the intention to create wood-first legislation, which has not been implemented to date, but the province is committed to pursuing that. Alberta's forestry industry has also called on the province to implement similar legislation, so clearly there is a precedent for this. There is evidence across the country where there are benefits to this, and I would obviously be lending my support to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan with respect to this bill.

A couple of other things: It's important to highlight that we are taking steps to use wood fibre and the forestry products that we find in Ontario to ensure that we can expand businesses. I think of a company called Rentech that is using pelletization and adapting jet fuel. In testing that has been done, that's seen to be a tremendous benefit to the Ontario economy. They're setting up a company in the Algoma–Manitoulin region, which is an absolutely fantastic news story.

Speaker, I need to stop there because I want to make sure that my colleague from Peterborough has the opportunity to comment. I want to lend my wholehearted support to the good work from the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, and I will certainly encourage members in this Legislature to support this legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on Bill 61 as well. The member from Sault Ste. Marie made a number of comments, as did the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, regarding the bill and the impacts on the industry. Although energy costs may not be the singular cost factor, although some companies—as was mentioned, Xstrata certainly expressed a concern regarding the cost of producing fibre—or, in that case, the mining costs. It is one of the key components. When you add the other aspects coming forward—when you talk to the industry, and the member would know that very well, whether it's the caribou management strategy that has been brought forward by the province of Ontario and the species at risk and the impact that has taken place on the forestry sector in regard to that, the implementation guidelines and sometimes the interpretation of the implementation guidelines throughout northern Ontario are very different from office to office. The difficulty with that is, when a forestry company is out operating and they have a number of locations, they have different guidelines for the same species throughout northern Ontario.

The point I'm trying to make is that there are a number of aspects that come forward that make it very difficult for a forestry company to operate in Ontario. Certainly the energy cost, I believe, is one of them. When



you talk to those in Iroquois Falls, they're upgrading a lot of mills there in order to make sure that they could supply what they needed in that area to manage. But part of the problem is that when companies like that, and particularly the time in Iroquois Falls I can recall—they were more concerned because they would shut down the mill in order to sell the energy as opposed to cutting the fibre at that time. The difficulty with that is not just the individuals working in the mill but all those other individuals that are supplying the mill. They were making more selling energy, which was part of a problem that needs to be addressed.

I think some of it is that, as a whole, we as a province need to look at value-added and how we can move forward with adding value to the wood forestry sector. Quite frankly, the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan has a great log home construction industry. I talked to Paul Poulin out at Stanley. He runs a great operation up there, and he flies around the world building log homes in New York and in Europe and in so many other locations. That's another way to add to that industry from another component. It builds the skilled trades necessary with it in order to add different or more value to the wood sector. There are so many other ways, whether it's the mill in Chapleau that uses a lot of the underutilized fibre for predominantly softwood cuts in log homes. He was building an aspen or poplar log home construction out of that area. That is very beneficial and can be transported in many areas.

These are other ways that the member from Sault Ste. Marie was talking about, how we can assist the industry in finding methods. But I believe that, moving forward with Bill 61 and 52 and bringing them together to find a common ground, we can work together as a province to aid that forestry sector in so many other ways in finding a benefit from added value to the forestry sector and providing jobs in the north. Anything that we can do as a government for the province of Ontario would certainly go a long way in ensuring the longevity of the forestry sector.

1510

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I want to be on the record for both similar bills today; we have two bills that do somewhat the same thing, and I just want to say that obviously I'm lending my support to both bills because I think they're essentially trying to do the same thing, and I'd just, for the record, make a couple of points.

These bills, if enacted, would allow us to change the building code so that we're able to do essentially what's being done in other countries. If you look at British Columbia and you look at different countries around Europe, there have been amendments to the building code after study to make sure that safety concerns when it comes to fire etc.—safety issues—are looked at. Those particular jurisdictions have amended their building code.

I want to commend the members for bringing this forward, because it's high time. It is a little bit of a no-

brainer, in my view, that we try to figure out a way we can maximize the use of what is a renewable resource in this province, which is trees. It seems to me ultimate good sense to move in that direction.

Now, all of this being said, it's going to take a little bit of work in order to make sure that some of the other things need to happen in order to pass this legislation into law. I would imagine the government is going to have something to say in regard to some of the concerns that were raised from the cement industry and others. I tend to think that those are things you can work around. Currently, for example, we have four-storey buildings, all wood construction in Ontario. Moving to six is not going to make a huge issue of safety in my mind, but I'm sure there are people who think that—and we'll hear that—coming to committee. I'd be interested to hear what they have to say.

However, that being said, I think the bills are a step in the right direction, and allow us to maximize the use of wood. Some of the amendments I'd be interested in seeing when these bills go to committee are the following: One, why don't we make it mandatory that they use Ontario wood? We have sawmills across this province that are struggling to keep their doors open, and that would like to see their market increase as far as being able to sell the wood. If going this way will allow us to sell more wood in Ontario, it seems to me that we should have a provision in those bills that says, "This is from Ontario sawmills." To allow it to come from anywhere kind of defeats the purpose. Aren't we trying to assist so that our mills are able to get wood?

Now some will say, "Oh, Bisson, you New Democrats are protectionists." It's not a question of being a protectionist. It's a matter of saying, "We have natural resources in this province that we want to see put to good use." If you look at the province of Quebec, they have no problem making sure that they put in place policies that favour the province of Quebec. If you look at Alberta, my good friends in Alberta have policies that benefit the province of Alberta when it comes to the oil sands. There's a whole bunch of other jurisdictions that might not like it, but for Albertans, that's the right thing to do.

I think it's high time that Ontario recognizes that, yes, we are one of fathers of Confederation; yes, we are the largest economy in Canada; yes, we have something to say and we have—well, now we're a have-not province, but let's not go there. The point is, we should be advocating for ourselves. So one of the amendments I'd like to see in both of these bills, should they get to committee, is that we actually look at something that says, "Let's make the wood come from Ontario."

The other thing I just want to put on the record—it's apropos because it is related to the wood industry, and I know Mr. Vanthof had been talking to shippers along the Ontario Northland railway. From all the way up in Constance Lake, all the way down to North Bay, you have sawmills and paper mills and others that are using that rail line as a way of being able to ship goods. If you privatize, which is essentially what you're doing when

you say you're going to divest, nobody is going to buy the railway. There's no money to be made in a railway. There's not a jurisdiction in the world that doesn't subsidize the railways, but they're a necessary part of the transportation infrastructure. Why? Because it allows us to move great quantities of equipment and great quantities of natural resources and other things and not have a bigger footprint when it comes to the economy.

If we have to shut the railway down—and that's what is going to happen when you divest the Ontario Northland—I'm sure the buses will be bought by somebody, and I'm sure that the ferry services will be bought by somebody. But when it comes to the train, for darned sure it's going to be sold. If that was not the case, why did the government not divest the Polar Bear Express going from North Bay up to Moosonee? Why? Because they know that nobody would buy it. There's no money to be made. You have to subsidize that particular service.

So I would say that we need to keep the Ontario Northland, and I look forward to trying to finally get some support from the Conservative caucus and Mr. Fedeli, because I know they're big proponents of divestiture. They believe in privatization. Mike Harris tried to do the same thing. The Tories are essentially supporting the Liberals on this one, but I would ask that you put your partisanship and your ideology aside and say, "Listen, for northeastern Ontario the right thing to do is save the Ontario Northland so that shippers along the route are able to stay in business." I much fear that there's a lot of economic activity in northern Ontario that's going to be in jeopardy if we shut down that railway, let alone what's going to happen to citizens: Lecours Lumber, Tembec when it comes to shipping, Abitibi out of Iroquois Falls, and the list goes on—Cochrane and others.

I urge members to support these bills. I urge members in the Liberal Party to change their position on the divestiture of ONTC. I invite the Conservative Party to take a step to the right side, which is the left side of the issue, which is you will not divest Ontario Northland.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member from Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It's indeed a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to get a few words on the record on Bill 61. I was here to listen to the debate on Bill 52—similar bills to achieve similar objectives to improve the state of the forestry industry in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I took the opportunity—I happen to follow Mark Carney very closely. He is the governor of the Bank of Canada. On April 2, 2012, he delivered a very interesting speech to the Greater Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, talking about Canada's economy the way it currently is and exporting in a post-crisis world. He had some interesting things to say.

He said, "Of course, there have been occasional setbacks over the past 125 years, with more than 20 recessions, one depression and one near miss. In general, the recoveries that have followed have relied importantly on exports. However, this one is" dramatically "different.

Exports still have not regained their pre-crisis peak, and in fact remain below their level of a decade ago. Canada has steadily lost global market share throughout this period."

He goes on to further look at another area, "A Unique Recession and Recovery." He said, "The broad economic strategy in response to the global financial crisis has been to grow domestic demand and to encourage Canadian businesses to retool and reorient to the new global economy.

"On the former, we have been successful. Even as pressure on the export-oriented manufacturing sector has intensified, domestically oriented sectors such as services and construction have remained resilient. With strong domestic fundamentals and a well-functioning financial system," and stimulative monetary policies, domestic demand is showing a robust recovery.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that essentially what we're talking about today is two bills that would really fire domestic demand, particularly in the forest sector. My colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan has been involved in this, converting the coal-fired plant in Atikokan to use biomass.

But one of the things we have to be very cautious about is that we do live in an open economy. We trade with other countries; we trade with other provinces. I'm told right now that we take ore from the province of Quebec, and it is processed in Sudbury, where that generates over 1,000 jobs. So there is always this give-and-take when it comes to setting policies in place that encourage domestic demand.

But when you look at both of these bills, the need to use more wood, I can think of a wide variety of structures. For example, we're about to embark on building a lot of structures related to the Pan Am Games. Mr. Speaker, this would be a perfect opportunity to look at how we can incorporate wood into building those kinds of structures. That would provide a huge incentive to the forestry industry in the province of Ontario and support both the bills from my colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan and the member for Nipissing.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you to the members from Nipissing, Kenora–Rainy River, Sault Ste. Marie, Oshawa and Timmins–James Bay.

To the member from Nipissing, I have to say that the fact that you would stand and say that if the Far North Act had been enacted one or two years earlier there would be no Ring of Fire is quite remarkable. I have no idea how you draw a conclusion like that. Maybe perhaps we both need to sit down and read the act together.

Where it might have got stopped is the NDP platform that was on their website in the last election that said "no development at all north of 50 or north of 51." That might have stopped it, but certainly not the Far North Act.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We never said that.



**Mr. Bill Mauro:** It was on your website for three years.

To the Kenora-Rainy River member still pretending, still blaming: Northern caucus has worked on these issues for a very great deal of time. To suggest that somehow we are dismissive of the forestry industry is a very, very serious issue.

1520

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, give me a break.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I will tell the member from Timmins-James Bay that it was on your website. It was on your website in the election, so you need to check it out. It's there.

To the member from Oshawa, I would say—he's still here in the chamber, and I thank him for staying. I thank him for his comments—again, a little bit of a link on the forestry challenges that we've experienced for about 10 years to electricity.

I would say on the sawmilling side that electricity was not and is not a significant input cost for them. If, in fact, that was the case, we would not have seen the closures that occurred in BC and in Quebec, where everybody acknowledges their electricity prices are much lower than they are here in Ontario and have historically always been. If it was the case, we would have simply seen our sawmills transfer their capacity to those other jurisdictions. That didn't happen, because they were all closing, and they were closing for other reasons.

Speaker, our northern caucus has been working on issues related to forestry for a very long time. I thank all the members of the northern caucus.

This bill today: We know it's not going to revolutionize and bring the industry back, but it's one more piece. It's one of the things that we can control. It's one of the things that we can try and have an impact on. It's not about blaming, not about making up arguments as we go along; it's about trying to have a positive impact on the things that we can control. I look forward to the support of all the members.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. We'll take the vote on this item at the end of regular business.

#### PROVINCIAL DEBT

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, after the provincial budget is balanced, the government should begin paying down the provincial debt by creating a new line item in the budget, committing to making a payment on the principal of the provincial debt of at least 2.5% of the program spending of that fiscal year.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** This past Tuesday's Globe and Mail contained an article by Adam Radwanski which was noteworthy. The title of the article was, "Ontario Set for a Top-to-Bottom Review." The subtitle informed readers

that the Minister of Finance was about to unleash productivity teams in the hopes of meeting deficit reduction targets. A more apt but somewhat less flattering title for the article might have been, "Conversion on the Road to Damascus." The only problem with this metaphor is that Paul's conversion was preordained, and the minister's conversion is, well, politics.

According to the article, it would seem that our friend the Minister of Finance has finally come to the conclusion and is finally prepared to publicly acknowledge that the government of Ontario has a spending problem.

Let's think back a while. Remember back to the fall of 2003, eight and a half years ago, in the early, heady days of the McGuinty government just after they were elected. Their members were filled with enthusiasm, but they started off whining and moaning about the deficit they claimed they had inherited, neglecting to mention that they had assumed office in the middle of a fiscal year, that they could have tried to reduce spending in the second half of that year—but instead they ramped it up, consistent with what was to come—and that their so-called Auditor General's report was in fact the report of a hired consultant who gave them the report that they had paid him to write. Let's remember what they did.

Our party, in our last budget in 2003, projected a balanced budget for that fiscal year. We knew it wouldn't be easy—it never is—but we were going to try. Then came the SARS outbreak, which hurt our tourism industry. Then came mad cow disease, which hurt our agriculture industry. Then came the hydro blackout, which hurt our manufacturing industry. All of these unforeseen crises were addressed one by one by our government. None had originated in Ontario—no one in Ontario was at fault—but we faced them head on. Leadership was necessary, and the Progressive Conservative government provided it. However, there was an economic cost for each crisis, which impacted our revenues and obviously the budgetary outlook that year.

The election date was fixed. It was to be October 2003, ironically about halfway through the fiscal year. Now, if we had been re-elected, no doubt we would have sought savings in-year and made a genuine effort to balance the budget in the second half of the fiscal year. But we were not re-elected, and the Liberals took office.

They decided to misuse the professional credibility of Erik Peters, who was by then retired as an Auditor General and was a paid consultant, to validate their shell game. So they ramped up spending in the second half of the fiscal year, pretended to throw up their hands and blamed the deficit on the outgoing government. Mr. Speaker, was it a half-truth or was it an outright fabrication of the truth? I've drawn my own conclusion. But it's interesting to note that the deficit that they run today is almost three times the number they whined about in 2003, just as it's three times the deficits of the other provinces in Canada combined.

The fact is, they were ready to come into this House and spend. Invest in public services, they said—health, education, yes, which we all support—but also every

other spending idea that they could think of. Year after year, under the McGuinty Liberals, overall provincial spending went up 6% to 8%, while inflation was about 2% and economic growth stalled and then receded. And the spending continued; indeed, it accelerated.

When the word got out that the McGuinty Liberals had opened up the vault and they were handing out the taxpayers' money with abandon, not surprisingly, the interest groups lined up. Spend, spend, spend and then spend some more, and ideally have the local MPP—or the closest local Liberal MPP, I should say, geographically—deliver the cheque in person, with the requisite photo op and with the nice speech, all to take credit. If anyone in the government noticed that the vault was starting to empty out, nobody had the nerve to mention it to the Minister of Finance or the Premier. They had a formula, they had a template for photo-op events, and they raised it to an art form through sheer repetition.

Politically, it served them well in the short term, in that they were re-elected four years later, in 2007, but in that the government of Ontario had totally lost control of its overall spending, the people of Ontario began to lose. This is where we're at today.

I need to go back again, because no government spending crisis emerges overnight. It develops over the years, as fiscal discipline is first ignored and then forgotten altogether and irresponsible patterns of money mismanagement become the norm.

In my very first speech in this place, more than 21 years ago, I wrote my maiden speech and said these words in this House: "We in Wellington understand the economic value of hard work and the social value of personal responsibility. From this understanding stems a serious concern when our government refuses to live within its means, when our government grows until it begins to inhibit overall economic growth, when even excessive taxation does not prevent the expansion of our government debt."

In those days, I was sitting over there, our caucus was known in the House as the third party, and Bob Rae was the Premier of Ontario. Fiscal responsibility was not really something that initially troubled Premier Rae, at least not until he was faced with the news, around 1993, that the province would soon be bankrupt, which led to the social contract, which infuriated his supporters, which directly contributed to the NDP's defeat in 1995. But all this is ancient history, before Mr. Rae attempted to reinvent himself, this time as the interim and now aspiring permanent leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. The fact remains that the provincial debt essentially doubled during his five years as Premier, from 1990 to 1995.

Dalton McGuinty isn't far behind. After just over eight years as Premier, he's on track to soon double the debt yet again. Last week, I had the chance to speak to a local service club in my riding. I was asked to speak about the budget, and so naturally, I talked about the deficit and the debt, since the red ink of this government is their signature legacy. I told them the unvarnished facts. Despite the government's rhetoric that this is an

austerity budget, in fact, there is very little austerity in it. Spending is actually up over last year—up by almost \$2 billion, from \$124.6 billion to \$126.4 billion. Last year's deficit came in at \$15.3 billion. This so-called austerity budget projects a deficit of \$15.2 billion. Over the past year, the overall provincial debt will rise from \$237.6 billion to a staggering \$260.4 billion. The net per capita debt, in effect the amount of the provincial debt that each Ontarian owes, will rise from \$17,766 last year to \$19,243 this year. It was \$11,339 when the McGuinty government came to power in 2003. This government will have increased that number by almost \$8,000 for each and every Ontarian, in just nine years. This year alone, they will pay \$10.6 billion in interest to service the debt. This does not even begin to pay down one penny of the principal of that debt. The \$10.6 billion that they will pay to service the debt this year is the third-highest provincial expenditure in the budget, behind only health care and education. This year, they will pay more in interest on the debt than they will spend on post-secondary education, more than they'll spend on transportation infrastructure and more than they will spend on economic development, for example.

This is at a time of historically low interest rates. According to the Auditor General's report, page 29, a 1% increase in interest rates would result in an additional \$500 million in interest each year at our current debt level.

#### 1530

After I'd finished going through some of these numbers with the service club, a man I'd known for a long time, who I like and respect, came up to me. He was angry—even livid. He said to me, "You've got to go down there and tell them that they're taking my grandchildren to the edge of a cliff, and they're pushing them off."

My resolution is for his grandchildren, for all of our children and grandchildren, and for anyone else who cares about Ontario's long-term future. It is a modest proposal, but it speaks to a larger principle that has so often been overlooked, the old-fashioned value that our parents' generation taught us but so many have forgotten: You shouldn't spend what you don't have. You need to live within your means. It recognizes that we simply should not continue to rack up the debt and leave the bill for our children and grandchildren to pay.

My resolution asks that, when the budget is finally balanced, the government commit to making debt repayment a line item in the budget. It suggests that we should commit to a goal of making a significant payment on the principal amount of debt, not just the interest. It is endorsed by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and it has also been endorsed by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Wellington-Halton Hills believe that with the right leadership and the right policies, Ontario's best days are yet to come—the promise of the future. But in the past few years, we have seen Ontario, once the economic engine of Canada,



become a have-not province. We have seen the provincial debt climb higher and higher each year. This is why I introduced this resolution today. No one on this side of House believes the McGuinty government will ever balance the budget. They simply lack the will and they lack the wherewithal to get the job done.

In 2003, just after the McGuinty Liberals had been elected, I introduced a motion calling on the government to commit itself to a long-term debt repayment plan. Not surprisingly, in light of the spending spree that they planned and was to come, the Liberal members voted it down.

Ultimately the task of balancing the budget and beginning to pay down the debt will most likely fall to a successor government, after a provincial election, when we have a government that's serious about balancing the books; when we have a government that offers more than just rhetoric about getting our spending under control. This resolution makes the point that we need to start making payments, however modest, on the principal of our debt and begin to strengthen our province's balance sheet. It's the right thing to do. It's the responsible thing to do. We have a duty to our children and our grandchildren.

Let us pass this motion, and let it be said by future generations that on this day, in this place, the Legislature embraced the promise of the future.

I ask all members to support my resolution today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just want to say upfront we're going to be supporting this resolution, but we would do it in a very different way than the Conservatives are suggesting. To suggest that we have to cut spending as the only means to be able to find a way to apply money to the debt and to the principal, I think is a bit of a stretch.

I want to remind you of people like Tommy Douglas, who took over in Saskatchewan back in the first times that they took government. The Liberals there had driven that province literally into bankruptcy. The province was not able to borrow money, they were in terrible shape, and Tommy Douglas for 16 years as Premier of Ontario balanced the books—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Premier of Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Excuse me, Saskatchewan—balanced the books and brought that province to the position it is now.

New Democrats across the country have proven that if you take a look at what's happened with Mr. Doer in Manitoba and his successor, you take a look at what we did in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, what we're doing in Nova Scotia and, I would argue, what we would have done in Ontario—that brings me to the point of the Conservative member. He talks about how they worked to balance the books. Listen, if we have a deficit today, a large part of it is what the Conservative government did when they were in power by way of the tax cuts.

Bob Rae had put in place—and I hate to use that name, but we put in place a plan that would have eliminated the deficit about a year after we left office—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** He's not there anymore.

But the point is, the Harris government came in and accelerated and put in place tax cuts that essentially took revenue away that we're still paying for today. I think it was part of the plan. I think what the Conservatives are all about is, they don't like government. They would rather we all go on our own and pay for our own health care and pay for things ourselves because they don't believe in doing things in common, as I do as a social democrat. So they said, "What better way to undo government than to take away the money?"

So, like George Bush in the United States and a whole bunch of people around the world, they've adopted the right-wing mantra: "Tax cuts are the way to prosperity." Well, my friends, tax cuts have caused pain in this province—pain that we're still feeling today because what it's done is taken away the revenue that we need in order to make sure that people are not left behind.

Yes, I will vote for this resolution because as a social democrat, as a New Democrat, I believe we need to balance the books and we need to live within our means. But my friends, there are many ways to the road to Damascus, and the Conservative option is not one of them for me.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to stand in this House today to speak to the opposition motion. This motion comes forward as we are obstructed on a daily basis from having that debate on the budget. I have to start off with that.

Who has solved problems in this country? I would think that we have to mention that the Martin-Chréien government that got Canada out of a \$45-billion deficit has to be lauded. I have to repeat as well what Clinton had done: They looked at surpluses going ahead as far as they could see. George Bush, with his far-right policies, only worried about the taxes on the very rich and kept reducing those, kept reducing his revenues, and of course left the western world in an awful mess because of what they did. So this idea of who is best, whether it's Liberals or Conservatives or the third party—we've had good records of both.

We should first of all speak about the budgets generally, as this motion speaks about budgets. I'd like to say what is important to me. Parts of the budgets since I've been here in 2003, the parts that are important to our children and grandchildren—and we can talk about the slash-and-burn attitude of the opposition government or we can talk about the important changes that, with the support of the third party, have been brought in since 2003. They are many, and that's so important. The slash-and-burn is not good for our children and grandchildren because it takes away the hospitals; it takes away the schools. We have now done a great job.

We all agree in this House that jobs are number one as well, and a balanced budget will make the economy stronger and make our province better and able to create

the jobs, while keeping education and health care strong. That's important. We have to get the deficit down and we have a plan, a five-year plan, that is going to accomplish this while protecting what is really important: the education for our children, full-day kindergarten, the smaller class sizes from 1 to 3 and the graduation rates which are so important. Imagine, in the last five or six years there have been 100,000 more high school kids who have a graduation certificate—100,000 in this province—because of the changes that this government brought in over the years for early intervention, helping these kids, not only saying, "Hey, it's all academic and that is the way we go." The people with technical skills are able to proudly accept that certificate and go on to a college and get a better job. Those are the things that are important. A balanced budget is one thing, but certainly the services for our kids are more important.

In 2003, when we came in, in good times, there was a \$4.5-billion deficit left by the Conservatives. We cleaned that up. But there wasn't only the deficit in dollar terms, there was a deficit in hospitals; so many hospitals had been closed. We had the longest wait times in the country. Our schools were in trouble. We had millions and millions of days lost because we were fighting the teachers. We were going along—I think it was three or four balanced budgets after that, which is excellent. We were doing what we wanted to do. But, unfortunately, there was the financial crisis in 2009 that they want to disregard—that didn't happen. But we're one of strongest countries and one of the strongest provinces in the world after that terrible crisis almost on the same basis as the Great Depression.

Cheap labour from offshore has come in and made a big change for us. The high dollar, going from—we were talking about the lumber industry and what it did to that, or the paper industry. I remember the 65-cent dollar—going up to over par and now back to par. So 70% of our products go to the US. The US markets are not as strong as they were; they're in terrible shape. And that's the Bush, that's the conservative, that's the tax-cut, far-right, Tea Party approach to doing things.

We lost over 300,000 jobs in manufacturing after 2009, but we've seen 450,000 jobs come back. That is great. Just last month, there were 46,000 new jobs in Ontario, over half of all the jobs created in Canada. So we're doing well. Unemployment rates are down from 9.4% to 7.6%. So, we can't—we have to go with the proper things. Our green energy strategy is on track to attract 50,000 jobs.

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This motion would apply once we have our balance back in 2017-18. I know I would support paying down the debt. I've always been that way with my own personal dollars. I think that is a good endeavour, but we don't want to strap a future government with that kind of thing. You know what saved the auto sector was a major investment by this government and the federal government, and we protected 300,000 jobs. It would be unwise to tie any government's hands. Who knows what the priorities, what the options will be when that happens?

We reduced corporate taxes and brought the HST down, and all the real leaders knew we must do that. It was needed. We supported the HST. You did until you saw it was hurting you in the polls. We had the courage to bring in the HST, and now we are an economy that is rated the best place other than California to invest in, in North America—the best. The HST had a lot to do with that. You cowards would not do that. You would not support that.

I see my time is run running out; I have to leave some.

I'd like to end with two quotes:

"To get there, the government is making some tough but necessary choices"—Janet Ecker, president of the Toronto Financial Services Alliance.

"I disagree with Mr. Hudak, he's talking about swift action," cut and burn, "and swift action would mean a deep recession ... swift action in terms of cutting spending even further or raising taxes. So this budget must balance austerity with growth, that's a very tough act but I think they've done a pretty good job."—Patricia Croft, former chief economist, RBC Global Asset Management.

Speaker, we could go on for hours on the right things we've been doing creating jobs and protecting our health care, but I have to turn it over and leave some time for my associates.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Since we have an opportunity, stop the clock right now.

The cross-debate is not helping me here or any speaker. All of us have come here on behalf of our communities, and we should just agree to disagree but not shout at each other.

Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I must say that argument from across the floor was certainly interesting, wasn't it?

I'm pleased to speak today in favour of debt reduction and in favour of today's motion "that, in the opinion of this House, after the provincial budget is balanced, the government should begin paying down the provincial debt by creating a new line item in the budget, committing to making a payment on the principal of the provincial debt of at least 2.5% of the program spending of that fiscal year." What a novel idea.

The member from Wellington-Halton Hills deserves our thanks for putting forward this motion. I know that this issue has been a major priority for him for many years. I congratulate him on his persistence and leadership and in drawing attention to the need to pay down the provincial debt. He has been a long-serving member of this Legislature and could not have been such a successful politician if he did not put the needs of his constituents, and indeed of Ontarians, first.

It should be our goal to pay down the debt, and not to slow its growth, not to sweep it under the rug and somehow hope it disappears. Sadly, the Liberal approach has been even worse than that. The provincial debt is on track to hit \$280 billion by 2013, double the size of the debt when this government took office in 2003. In other words, Premier McGuinty will have racked up as much debt as every other Premier since Confederation combined.



Now, after more than eight years of reckless spending, they want us to believe they get it. They want us to believe they understand the need for restraint. Nobody should believe it. The Liberal budget, if it's passed, will actually add a projected \$5.2 billion to Ontario's debt. That's one reason I can't support the budget.

As my colleague has said, Speaker, this government is already spending more in interest on the debt than they're spending on post-secondary education, transportation and economic development. What's their plan for when interest rates rise, as they almost certainly will? Of course, they don't have a plan. The only plan is to keep spending and hope that our grandkids can foot the bill.

This motion actually represents a plan. It's ambitious, but it's also realistic. There is no good reason that the government couldn't set aside 2.5% of the money it spends on programs to start paying down the debt. We work hard to pay down debt in our households and our businesses, and the government needs to do it. And when times are tough, we don't go on spending sprees, and neither should the government. The time has come to take responsibility and I hope that all MPPs, whether on the government or opposition side, will agree. I hope they will support this motion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Parkdale—High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must say, it has been a very long day for you. You've done a superlative job filling in, so, way to go.

It's always a privilege and a pleasure to rise in this place. Truly, I think my role here is to speak for those who usually don't have a voice here. One such group came to visit us this afternoon—many missed it—the Put Food in the Budget group, who had walked here carrying a stuffed mannequin of Dalton McGuinty, to talk about how the budget had affected them. We're talking about the Liberal budget; I would say, the Liberal-Conservative budget, unlike the Conservative-Conservative budget in Ottawa.

To talk to my friend over here, though, and the motion that he's put forward: It's a just a little bit rich for a Progressive Conservative, particularly one who actually spent time here during the Harris-Eves days, when they added more than \$50 billion to the debt. That's chicken feed in comparison to our friends across the aisle, who have doubled the debt, but there's a kind of competition going on here, Mr. Speaker, of fiscal irresponsibility. I'm standing as a social democrat saying that, guess what? Social democratic governments, NDP governments in this country, have the best record of fiscal responsibility. We have balanced more budgets than all of you put together, seconded by the Conservatives and thirded, of course—expectedly so—by our friends across the aisle. So that's the actual reality.

I would argue that the reason for this—it is a fact; you can play with other things, but this is a fact—is because we see budgets and fiscal responsibility clearly because we don't want to give any more money to the banks either. We want to give money to education. We want to

give money to health care. We think that's where taxpayers' dollars should go, not to interest payments to large multinationals and banks. That's not what we're about. And so we take taxpayers' dollars to be precious commodities and we ask for and we always administer tax fairness.

What's not being talked about here is tax fairness. In what world is it fair to freeze social assistance rates and then to completely ignore the incomes of the wealthiest people in this province? In what world is it fair to ask middle-class Ontarians and those who live in poverty to shoulder the problem of paying off the deficit and not ask those who are making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year? There are 550,000 unemployed in this province, and I love the fact that the member from Ottawa—Orléans thinks it's a good thing that we have 7.6% unemployment. What? In what world is that a good thing? Five hundred and fifty thousand people unemployed in this province, and what we're asking for, Mr. Speaker, and we don't have an answer yet, is just a modicum of an increase on those making \$550,000.

**1550**

Now, I know that most Ontarians think that's the way to go. In fact, some 76%—I think 78%—of Ontarians think that's the way to go, and we do as well. We're just waiting. We're waiting for our friends to give us some indication that they agree with us across the aisle, because this is—oh, my goodness, what a modest proposal. And not only is it a modest proposal, but today our leader, out of the generosity of her willingness to make this government work, said we'll even take one of our demands off the table.

Let's make this government work. That's what Ontarians are asking us to do. They elected us with a mandate, and that is to make this minority government work.

My friends to the right have no intention of doing so. That's clear. But the question remains, do our friends across the aisle have an intention of doing so? That is the question, and that is the question that all Ontarians should be asking themselves. When it comes to playing chicken here, the question is—this shouldn't be about who blinks first. This should be about collaboration and co-operation to actually get the best deal, the best and the fairest deal, for the vast number of Ontarians. So really, that's what we're talking about.

We're also talking about a totally different approach to the way you administer a budget. And that, we have shown in our history, by being the best at balancing budgets in the country of Canada and in provincial governments generally. I won't talk about that one guy, the one guy who went on to federal Liberal politics. I won't mention his name. God forbid I mention his name.

But in the vast majority of provinces that we have been governments of, we have balanced budgets; in Manitoba, nine balanced budgets. My goodness. Social democrats know what to do with taxpayers' money. They know how to handle it. They know how to treat it, as I said, as the precious commodity it is.

It is a modicum of—I might even say amusement to hear from the member about chipping away at the debt.

It's no doubt a good thing to do, but to come from a party that added \$15 billion to it, hmm, somewhat suspect. Certainly the party across the aisle has no credibility on this issue. We get that.

So, here we are: New Democrats, social democrats, the fiscally responsible ones, looking at ways to do that, and being responsible in a minority government by asking the government and asking, of course, the official opposition to work with us to make this work. We've had their answer. We know their answer: No. We haven't yet heard from across the aisle.

I would leave some moments for my friend. But I'm just saying, when will we hear? What will we hear? I leave in hope.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Speaker, I find it passing strange that the member opposite who has brought this private member's bill forth has brought a matter that he wants to address in the budget by way of a private member's bill. And yet, since we introduced the budget, we've been pleading with the other side in this minority government situation to sit down with us and talk about the budget and perhaps even negotiate some items, and the answer has always been "No, no, no." In fact, the leader of the official opposition, within an hour of the budget being presented on a Thursday a couple of weeks ago, was in front of the media publicly staking out his position that under no circumstances would they support the budget.

That is not in the spirit of minority government, so it seems very, very strange that rather than sitting down with the government and the third party and the official opposition and trying to have some meaningful, thoughtful conversations to structure a budget that is acceptable to all members of this House—what are they doing? They're tinkering around with these dinky little things, a private member's bill on a Thursday afternoon that's going to do something about paying down the deficit by—why don't you sit down with us on a substantive basis and let's negotiate and talk about the budget and the overall effect and all of the details in the budget? It's passing strange.

The second point I want to make: They've been whining about what a bad budget it is and they can't find anything in it, but what does informed opinion outside of this House say about the budget? And informed opinion among Conservative leaders, well-known Conservatives, former Conservative finance ministers? Let me put into the record a couple of comments.

Here's a comment from the DBRS credit rating agency: "Overall, DBRS views the continuation of the fiscal recovery plan and the increasing emphasis on cost containment as an encouraging step in the right direction."

What does Janet Ecker, president of the Toronto Financial Services Alliance and former Conservative Minister of Finance say? She says this: "And while we have questions about some of the individual items, we strongly support their efforts to eliminate the deficit. It is an

important step for Ontario's future economic growth and will help support continued growth of financial service sectors in the province."

Mary Webb, senior economist at Scotiabank: "The challenge for this government in this budget was to provide a credible repair plan, and so it has. It has provided a broad-based plan—detailed, strategic—that they hope will keep them on the deficit reduction track even with more moderate growth."

Why wouldn't the opposition parties sit down with us and have that kind of a discussion that the economist for the Bank of Nova Scotia refers to—a detailed, comprehensive discussion—instead of playing around with these things by way of a private member's bill?

TD Economics: "Overall, today's budget carries with it prudent economic growths assumptions and more details behind the medium-term fiscal plan in. In this vein, the budget should be well received by credit rating agencies."

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce: "The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has called for a two-pronged approach to balancing the books: deficit reduction and a clear focus on growth and transforming the Ontario economy for the 21st century. Overall, today's budget positions us to move in this direction."

These thoughtful people outside of this chamber, some of whom are distinguished former Conservative politicians and indeed finance ministers, recognize what we're trying to do in the budget. They're supportive of it, they've given it their imprimatur, and yet across the aisle, within an hour after the budget, they condemned it. They not only condemned it, they said, "We're not going to talk about it anymore." They haven't talked about it anymore since then, several weeks ago, and now, late in the game, Thursday afternoon around 4 o'clock, two days before the budget vote on Tuesday, they bring forward a private member's motion to tinker with the budget. That's not being responsible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Speaker, I'm going to tell you, my friend from Willowdale used the term "passing strange" twice in his three and a half or four minutes. I'll tell you what's passing strange. I just listened to a contribution to what, to me, seems like the budget debate, when that's not what's being debated here at all. What's being debated is a motion by my friend from Wellington-Halton Hills that is very similar to two other motions that he's brought before this House, once in the 1990s and once in 2003, voted down by your party in 2003.

The bottom line on this is the most—I'm hearing from the member from Ottawa-Orléans that somehow or other we're being irresponsible. The only irresponsibility I see here is not taking the responsibility that this motion calls for. This motion, which was not evoked by the budget that we're considering now, this motion, which was evoked by a great sense of responsibility by my friend from Wellington-Halton Hills, is about taking the responsibility of paying down the provincial debt on a



go-forward basis with mandatory rules and regulations—2.5% of the principal every single year. You know what?

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order. The member from Willowdale, if I could bring you to order. You had your chance to speak and I would ask you to keep order for the other side to give their comments.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I appreciate that, Speaker, because it's hard to think when you have someone who's the epitome of "Methinks the lady doth protest too much." No lady, him.

**1600**

Anyway, the point is this: This motion calls for a 2.5% reduction of the principal that exists on the provincial debt on an annualized basis, and it would only kick in, if this motion were passed, at a point where we balance the budget. Well, right now, we aren't anywhere near balancing a budget. They're talking about 2017-18. I'm going to tell you something: It's going to snow in July before they balance the budget by 2017-18. We're looking at \$15.3 billion this year, and we're looking at a government that is so arrogant that it looks across the way at me and says that I didn't sit down with the finance minister or that somehow or other my 36 colleagues, my leader and I are at this point forfeiting our right to even comment on the budget because of the fact that we haven't sat down and been collaborative.

You know what the truth is? If you'd listened to my debate yesterday, you'd know what the truth was. The truth was that we had 20 people in the lock-up, that we parsed that budget chapter by chapter, that we sat down in front of whiteboards, that we considered it with our leader—I, as critic of finance, and with my colleagues—and we came to the conclusion that you don't even come close; you don't even come close to a scenario where you're running a proper government at this time, much less balancing the budget in 2017-18.

The point that my colleague is bringing forward makes eminent sense, but under your government is virtually impossible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to rise today to add my comments to the bill brought forward by the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. I see I have two minutes and 50 seconds. It should be plenty of time to resolve this debate, as far as I'm concerned.

The member spoke of a duty to our children. There certainly is a duty to our children: a duty to ensure that they have proper education, proper health care, a clean environment. Those are things that don't come about with the singular focus of cutting taxes. That cannot be achieved, and of course we will never achieve the progressive society that we need with an all-out abdication of our responsibility as government here. It just hasn't happened. It will never happen. In fact, it is what got us into this position in the first place. It happened through measures of deregulation and privatization in other jurisdictions that created the domino effect that led to the

global recession, global economic downturn. These are points that have been clearly articulated within economic circles around the globe, and yet it seems as though it's on the periphery here in terms of our discussion.

I'd also like to point out to all members in the House that we have so many wonderful businesses in this province, and I can't find too many of them that don't operate with a functioning debt and don't have the ability to carry debt and to prioritize their needs to make capital investments in their businesses, but also to acknowledge that that debt is actually a healthy debt. In fact, I have debt. I have some credit card debt; I have some student loan debt. And as it accumulates, guess what happens? The credit card companies call me up and say, "Hey, you've got some debt. We want to up your limit. We want to give you some more credit, actually." They're evil. But yet, I'm able to manage it. Maybe they recognize that I'm fiscally prudent with the management of my debt.

We can do that here, Mr. Speaker. We can prioritize the debt that we embark on. All members in this House, all affiliated parties, are guilty of adding to the provincial debt at some point in history or another. You should all own that, but own it and be responsible with it. Don't back away from it as if it's something you can't handle. Either you can manage this province and manage its debt or you can't, because the province and the people of this province are going to ask you to do that. You're going to have to be able to show them that you can.

That's why my colleague points out, quite accurately, that New Democrats across the board, in all the provinces that we've ever represented, have the best fiscal record in terms of managing their debt, investing in their social economy—electrifying, where Tommy Douglas electrified Saskatchewan, brought in health care. Those are all things you can do when you're proper stewards of the finances of the province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I had some prepared notes here, but as I sit back and listen to the debate on both sides, I think we have lost sight and lost focus of what this particular motion is truly all about. It's not about how well the NDP or how well the government has been performing in the past, or how well the PCs. That's not what this is all about, as I see it. I see it as simply this, and what we are saying is this: Once the budget is balanced, the motion calls for the government to begin paying down the provincial debt by at least 2.5% of program spending of the fiscal year.

This debate has been focused, so far, on everything but what my colleague and esteemed member has been talking about. So it forces me and causes me to lead back to my inaugural speech where I talked about, for all of us to be successful here in the House, you've got to have HEART, and I want to tell you what HEART is all about.

The H stands for honesty. We need to be honest with ourselves, but we also need to be honest with each other—nothing more, nothing less. The E is all about

effort, and we need to take a look at the effort we're really, truly putting forth and not wasting our time. We need to be getting down to business to do the business we've been elected to do. My colleague, with this particular motion, is all about getting down to doing what we need to do.

The A, for me, is all about attitude. We need to attack it with the right attitude, not with these partisan thoughts and ideas about, "Because you're an NDP or a Liberal or a PC you're not right; you don't have it right." We need to do a checkup from the neck up and look at how we're doing things.

The R in HEART is all about responsibility/accountability. You know, I was always told: To thine own self be true. We need to be responsible individuals here in this House. We need to be accountable to the people who have put us here. We need to be looking at these numbers and stop playing all this partisan stuff.

And the last thing: We need to look at being team players over there. We need to be team players and learn how to get along with everybody in the sandbox and quit throwing sand at everybody.

You've got to have HEART. If you want to be successful in your riding—if all of us want to be successful—we've got to have HEART.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to just sort of lower the tone a little bit. I believe that the previous speaker was excellent, but we're here out of respect for the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. As has been said earlier today, in all fairness this really isn't about the budget specifically. It's about after the government of Ontario—whoever that happens to be; it will probably be Tim Hudak—balances the budget in a respectable way, then what you need to do is make a commitment to the people of Ontario to pay off the credit card. That's what the thing is about. In fact, the member has discussed this since, I believe, 1998 was the first time, a similar bill that would look at a long-term strategy, a commitment to paying off the credit card.

When I look at the pages here and the young people and at student debt today, the accumulated debt is actually debt. Somebody holds that debt. It's an IOU of some sort. Now, we know that the economy is such that interest is very low today, so the cost of debt in Ontario now is about \$10 billion-and-some a year, the third-highest expenditure. But interest will be higher than inflation, or it should be, and if interest goes up, the debt could go from \$10 billion to \$20 billion, and we'll get nothing for it, because we've already spent the money. We're using somebody else's money to keep the economy going. Now, the argument here is, let's have a responsible solution and priorities for the province. You can't spend your way out of debt. Do you understand? It means some discipline has to occur.

Now, not all debt is bad. Debt for hospitals and universities is good debt. Capital debt is probably good debt; infrastructure is very important. But operating debt

is a structural deficit. In fact, Auditor General McCarter, in the pre-election report, told you that you have a structural deficit. He said that. On February 27, 2009, Don Drummond said that even if you look at the deficit, Ontario has a structural deficit. That means your growth in expenditures is faster than your growth in revenue. Look at the economy. It's flatlined; it's about 1.2%. You're actually creating more debt as we speak, about \$1.2 million an hour; each and every hour, you're spending more than you're receiving as revenue. This is debt on our children.

Do the responsible thing. Listen to the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. Have a plan—all we're looking for is a plan—that addresses how you're going to deal with the debt. A fool and his money are soon parted, and Dalton McGuinty is doing that to Ontario.

1610

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Member for Wellington-Halton Hills, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to respond to the MPPs who offered comments with respect to my resolution this afternoon. I want to thank the member for Perth-Wellington, the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex, the member for Durham, the member for Thornhill, and acknowledge the government members as well as the New Democrats who spoke to the resolution.

At least one of the NDP speakers indicated that they were going to support the resolution, and I want to thank the New Democrats for that. I'm not so sure about the Liberal members. We'll see what happens.

I want to respond to the member for Ottawa-Orléans, who said that he didn't want to tie the hands of future governments with respect to the finances of the province. What I would say to that member is this: With a huge deficit adding to the debt each and every year, with interest rates and interest costs likely to go up, does he not realize that that's tying the hands of future governments? Does he not understand that future generations will have to pay higher taxes year after year if we can't live within our means as a generation at present?

I would also commend him to read the most recent Auditor General's report, which he obviously has not read, page 29, where the Auditor General concludes in his section on the consequences of high indebtedness, "Once annual deficits are no longer the norm, one strategy for paying down debt is to hold the line on any future debt increases and use the additional revenues generated by a growing economy to start to reduce the debt. In any case, regardless of what strategy is contemplated, we believe the government should provide legislators and the public with long-term targets and a strategy for how it plans to address the current and projected debt burden."

Again, Mr. Speaker, I brought forward a resolution in 1997 that was, in fact, passed by the Harris government, which called upon the government to commit itself to a long-term debt repayment plan. When we balanced the budget after 1999, we did begin to pay down the debt. Of



course, in 2003 I brought forward a similar resolution after this bunch of Liberals was elected. They voted it down because they planned to spend like there was no tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is now here, and we've got to start to make plans to pay down the debt with regard to future generations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

ONTARIO FORESTRY INDUSTRY  
REVITALIZATION ACT (HEIGHT  
OF WOOD FRAME BUILDINGS), 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA REVITALISATION  
DE L'INDUSTRIE FORESTIÈRE  
DE L'ONTARIO (HAUTEUR DES  
BÂTIMENTS À OSSATURE DE BOIS)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 28, standing in the name of Mr. Fedeli.

Mr. Fedeli has moved second reading of Bill 52. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Regulations and private bills.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has moved to refer his bill to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Is the House in agreement that the bill go to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills? Agreed? Okay, there's agreement.

ONTARIO'S WOOD FIRST ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 PRIVILÉGIANT  
LE BOIS EN ONTARIO

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Mauro has moved second reading of Bill 61. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** The Standing Committee on Social Policy, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Agreed? Agreed.

PROVINCIAL DEBT

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Arnott has moved private members' notice of motion

number 17. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1614 to 1619.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would all members please take their seats?

Mr. Arnott has moved private members' notice of motion number 17. All those in favour please rise and remain standing.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Mantha, Michael	Shurman, Peter
Bisson, Gilles	McNaughton, Monte	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Munro, Julia	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	Natyshak, Taras	Vanthof, John
Gélinas, France	Nicholls, Rick	Walker, Bill
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Wilson, Jim
Hillier, Randy	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John
Jackson, Rod	Pettapiece, Randy	Yurek, Jeff

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura	Hoskins, Eric	Moridi, Reza
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Piruzza, Teresa
Broten, Laurel C.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 27; the nays are 30.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negated.*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**2012 ONTARIO BUDGET**

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 18, 2012, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The government House leader has moved government order number 2. At the adjournment of debate, Mr. Shurman had just finished his presentation, so we now move to questions and comments.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I listened, you might say, remotely yesterday to the member from Thornhill in his response to the budget. I think he unequivocally explained that the current government has no desire to deal in any responsible way with the budget. He made it very

clear that he made initiatives to the Minister of Finance right after the election in October to get together with the Minister of Finance, knowing full well how dismal a shape the budget was in.

Now, the government always likes to sort of work the numbers and then act like they're surprised. There was no surprise in the fiscal mess. What they did is they got Don Drummond to take the issue of the deficit and debt off the table over to Mr. Drummond—and I have a copy of his report here; I'll be speaking on it this afternoon.

But if you look at the history, I think this is important to put on the record. This is the report that I'm putting on the record here. It's by the Auditor General of Ontario, Jim McCarter. He issued a report in June 2008 and he told the Premier he had a structural deficit. He said his revenue forecasts in the election document were aggressive. So he alerted the people of Ontario that they had a structural deficit. He said that they've been spending at about 7% additional spending per year on average over their eight years, increasing it every year. He's saying that's not sustainable. Somehow they've manipulated this whole discussion about the careless, reckless spending, and I thought the member from Thornhill's speech yesterday was spot on. I commend him for those remarks, and I commend it to the members to get the Hansard from yesterday and read it, and you'll see that it's well done.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to rise today to add my comments.

You know, what an opportunity we have today, Speaker. What an opportunity the Liberal Party has, a government that undoubtedly has been off on the wrong track—off the rails, some would say—for the last eight years. They have a gift in front of them, perhaps no more evident than in a recent poll that indicates that one of many of our great ideas that we've proposed to them—it's one of many, but the one that seems to particularly have struck a pleasant chord with Ontarians is that 78% of Ontarians like our plan to raise taxes on those earning more than \$500,000 a year. I don't know if there's been a Liberal policy in the last eight years that has received that much of a glowing endorsement. Certainly it wasn't the HST; certainly it wasn't the eco fees. It certainly could not have been any of your other initiatives.

But here's one that as a gift we present, a wonderful proposal, one that will add some credibility to the government side, some fairness—much, much needed fairness—that I think this province has been lacking in terms of its legislation, in terms of its focus, for quite some time. It's one that we hope—and that's what my colleagues here were talking about today. It is hope that we cling to, that some of you on the other side have understood and have listened to our proposals and taken them seriously.

I can assure you that when you return to your ridings, that 78% approval rate will be there in your ridings as well. So that's why I say it's a gift to you. It's an idea

that we gladly didn't keep for the next election, which could be who knows when? We've given it to you right now—given it to you now to go back to your ridings and say, "Look: We're finally doing the right thing."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, it's always interesting to listen to the official opposition, because they say on one hand that they're in favour of fiscal responsibility. On the other hand, I know that their members are advocating for a number of projects:

—in Cambridge, the Cambridge Memorial Hospital expansion;

—in Burlington, the Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital expansion;

—in Wellington-Halton Hills, the Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus;

—in Perth-Wellington, the North Wellington Health Care, Mount Forest site renovation;

—in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, the Renfrew Victoria Hospital dialysis program expansion;

—in Elgin-Middlesex-London, the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital renovation;

—in Leeds-Grenville, the Brockville General Hospital expansion;

—in Burlington, of course, in highways, they're looking for the rehabilitation of the Burlington Skyway;

—in Barrie, the Duckworth Street interchange at Highway 400 is exceedingly important;

—in Wellington-Halton Hills, the new GO train station in Acton;

—in Parry Sound-Muskoka, the widening of Highway 69 north of Parry Sound;

—in Durham-Oshawa, the building of the 407 extension to Highway 35/115, with my friend Mr. O'Toole in favour of that;

—Simcoe North, the resurfacing of Highway 11 through Orillia, and surely the local member is advocating for that;

—in Chatham-Kent-Essex, improving the Highway 401 interchange at Highway 40 has to be high priority;

—in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, rehabilitating the Mississippi River bridge on Highway 17 in Amprior; and

—in Simcoe-Grey, replacing the Crown Hill overpass bridge at Highway 400.

They all want these projects to proceed, but they want to do as the old commercial says: They want to spend like Santa and save like Scrooge. You can't have it both ways.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

1630

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm very pleased to respond to the remarks given by the member for Thornhill, always someone who is able to provide the kind of analysis that people need to have in order to be able to understand some of the key parts of this budget. But when I talk to people, I'll give them two numbers, because people have



difficulty remembering a whole group of numbers and what they mean. The first one that I choose to use is the half a million people that are out of work in this province. As a member of the caucus, as an MPP for part of York region, I remind my listeners that the population of York region is just over one million. If you were to take that half-million unemployed group and put them in York region, you would safely be able to say that there would be not one employed person in that area. I think that it shocks people when they hear that because it suddenly brings it home that this is the impact, first of all on individuals who can't find a job, and the impact that it has on their families, but it's also the devastating impact that it has on a community. So when we look at the kinds of job losses that have brought us to this point of half a million people, it demonstrates the severity of the position that we find ourselves in in this province at this time. The budget has not demonstrated that it is a job-creating budget.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Thornhill, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I listened with interest to the comments of my friends from Durham, Essex, York-Simcoe and, yes, even St. Catharines, despite the fact that the minister, the member for St. Catharines, didn't comment at all on my speech but rather preferred to read a laundry list of all the spending that he's doing around the province.

It's an interesting thing, this spending. I want to talk about spending for a minute. We're concerned with the fact that this government claims that spending is down because it's only up by \$2 billion, which is kind of a contradiction in terms. Nobody ever said you shouldn't spend—and, by the way, you have to spend in NDP ridings and Progressive Conservative ridings and Liberal ridings; you just have to spend within your means. That's what this government has proven for eight and a half years now that it's not capable of doing, and that's what the complaint is on this side.

In terms of collaboration, collaboration is a two-way street. Collaboration is not just saying, "Come and tell us what you want"; it's actually sitting down in a reasonable time frame and taking some of the ideas from the opposition parties and saying, "Yes, we'll integrate them," not waiting until the eleventh hour and trying to work a deal to get two extra votes with the third party.

Our party has stood on its principles. Our party has never wavered from the fact that (a) we need a jobs program in Ontario right now—we need one desperately; and (b) the spending is out of control. The debt at \$15.3 billion is, contrary to what the government has to say, not something that should be celebrated.

I also spent a fair amount of time talking about the fact that question periods these days, as far as the Premier and the Minister of Finance are concerned, seem to be nothing much more than a branding period, trying to hang an election on us, which is patent nonsense, saying that we didn't sit down and collaborate, which is patent nonsense, and suggesting that somehow or other we have

forfeited our right to comment on this budget. We will never forfeit our right, and we will never forfeit our pledge to our constituents, which is to come here and represent their best interests.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It's always a pleasure to stand up and talk about economic matters.

I had the privilege of going to that lock-up. Just a few weeks ago, there was a lock-up. For those who have never been in a lock-up, those watching on TV, you go over there around noon, you go into a room, and you have to sign all kinds of oaths and say you're not going to discuss it with a single, solitary soul. You sit there for about four or five hours, and you read all these documents. You go into a lock-up with the press and you talk about what you think you've just read. Then you're all paraded over here, and you have to walk in a straight and solitary line with OPP officers watching your every move until you get into the Legislature.

You have a pretty good idea at that point what the finance minister is going to say. You're handed a copy of the finance minister's speech, and you get to read it as he is on his feet.

I will tell you, that was a disappointing day for me when I heard what the government was going to be doing in their budget, when I listened to the finance minister's speech, when I walked outside of this room and talked to ordinary people who did not have the benefit that I did of being in the lock-up, but who came here so full of hope and who saw that hope dashed on so many fronts. You had to know that this was not a budget that Ontarians were going to like.

Now, over the course of the last couple of weeks, I have seen Liberals stand up, cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, the Premier himself—you know, all of them standing up and saying that back in their riding people like this budget. I beg to differ. Back in your ridings, people do not like this budget. Some of them recognize that some of the harsher measures may have to be done, but they're not happy with it. They are not happy with where we have found ourselves today and the fact that their position in society, in their community, is very much at risk.

We, in the New Democratic Party, that day could have done the easy thing. We could have done exactly what my colleagues in the Conservative Party did. Before I went with our leader Andrea Horwath into the press scrum, I watched Mr. Hudak, the leader of the official opposition, and Mr. Shurman, the finance critic for their party—I watched what they had to say and I watched—right away, they weren't going to be supporting this budget. They obviously would not have had an opportunity, except what they would have had over four or five hours, to read the entire budget, but they probably had a pretty good handle on why they would not support it.

So I knew instinctively at that point that, in a minority Parliament, it fell to us. We had to do everything, and we did do everything, I think, to behave in a mature and

responsible fashion in looking at a budget that none of us liked—none of us like to this day. We looked at it. We went into caucus meeting. We went out to the public. We have elicited some 35,000 or 40,000 people; they have responded to us and told us what they like and don't like about the budget.

We also asked them the very tough question: If you don't like the budget, are you prepared to have an election at this time? And I will tell you that the results we got were almost exactly what the newspapers have printed from polls in the last couple of days. We got the majority of people saying they don't like the budget. We also got the majority of people saying they didn't want an election now. So we, in the New Democratic Party, have had to sit down and think this through, and we've done, I think, a pretty good job.

What we want and what we are asking for is reflecting the desires of the people of the province of Ontario, not just the 35,000 or 40,000 who have responded to us but the response from all of the people across the province, particularly through their local newspapers, through their members of provincial Parliament, through the polling that has been done.

We, as New Democrats, do not want to support a budget that only sacrifices middle and modest and poor people and does not ask the rich to sacrifice as well. Surely they cannot be immune from the course of actions that are taking place, or from the world economy or the economy that this province finds itself in. They are not special people, isolated out there who cannot be touched. They are part of us, and they have to do their part as well.

We cannot support something which puts the north at a disadvantage, and I'm speaking here particularly about the train—Ontario Northland. We cannot put a whole population that lives above the French River at some kind of disadvantage and isolation. We cannot do that. We have to make sure every opportunity they have in the north to develop the economy, to keep jobs at home, to keep young people wanting to live in those communities, to keep small towns and villages vibrant and alive is taken, and we cannot support shutting down something like the Northland.

We have to think about the 60,000 people who rely directly or indirectly on the horse racing industry. You cannot simply throw out 60,000 jobs and say, "Tough. We're taking your money, and you're losing your livelihood." We, as New Democrats, can't do that, and the government should not do that either.

1640

We cannot, with all conscience at all, abandon the poor, the elderly and children in this budget, as we see the budget has done. It's all well and good for Liberals to stand up all the time and say, "We're so much better than Conservatives. The Conservatives, when they were in power, cut the welfare rates by 21%. We are so humane and so wonderful, we're going to freeze them."

My goodness. Think about what has happened over these years. Think about when the minister stands up and says, "We've done a wonderful job for the poor," as he

did today. He said, "We've raised the welfare and ODSP rates seven times in the last eight years." Yeah, you have, but you've raised them in such piddly amounts they haven't even kept up with inflation, so the reality for the poor and the children and the destitute is that they are actually worse off under this government than they were under the government of Mike Harris. Nine years later, they're worse off today, and to freeze them is to freeze them in a situation that is destitute.

So the NDP decided we had to try to do something. We had to try to work with a government that just didn't seem to get it in the budget, and we have to try, if we can, to make this budget work. It's been a tough task. I would have thought some of the stuff we would suggest to the Liberals would have been no-brainers, particularly those Liberals who have a conscience, particularly those Liberals who come from the centre or left of centre of that party, which there seems to be all too few of.

We put together a list of 10 recommendations and we are simply asking that you look at these and that you agree with them, because if you agree with these 10 recommendations, I will tell you I won't have any difficulty keeping this government in power until after the budget day, which is the 24th, next week.

We have asked for a new tax bracket. This is an idea that is not new. This is an idea that's taking place all over the world. It's taking place in France, where it's wildly and hugely popular. President Obama has suggested the same thing in the United States; it's one of his key planks for re-election in this election year in the United States. And we, in the NDP, put this proposal forward because we thought it was the right thing to do.

Liberals must know it's the right thing to do politically, at least today, because today when I opened up the Toronto Star—I try to read it every morning, that and the Sun, because I need to know what both sides are saying—there was an article, and here it is. The Toronto Star, on page 6—I'm sure every Liberal read it four or five times, to digest what's in it. It says "NDP Proposal to Tax Rich a Hit, Poll Finds." Robert Benzie, Queen's Park bureau chief, who sits here amongst us all the time, wrote, "Ontarians overwhelmingly favour NDP leader Andrea Horwath's proposal to raise taxes on people who earn more than \$500,000 a year, a new poll suggests."

"Horwath has put forward the wealth surtax as one of her party's conditions for supporting Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty's budget, which will be voted on next Tuesday."

"More than three quarters of people surveyed—78%—like her idea, with only 17% opposed and 5% unsure, according to the Forum Research poll."

Then, inside the article, there's a sub-quote: "'It's hugely popular. You never see that—that's huge,' Forum president Lorne Bozinoff said Wednesday."

That's one of the things that's out there. It is contingent upon some of the other things we hope the Liberals are going to do, that they have the money to do. We have costed this. We believe this will bring in some \$570 million. The Liberals are saying maybe it will only



bring in \$450 million. Let's saw it off in the middle and say it's going to bring in half a billion dollars.

What can half a billion dollars do to help the people of Ontario? It's the question we ask and the question we ask of you. If you want to avoid an election, these are the kinds of things you can do with half a billion dollars. You can create 4,000 child care spaces, some of which are at risk across this province. You can make sure that 4,000 more families have adequate child care and that women, particularly women, have an opportunity to go out and work or to go back to school. This is a huge social thing that's desperately needed.

The second thing you can do is, you can increase the ODSP. It is not fair to people who are on welfare or ODSP to find themselves in the circumstances where their monies are being frozen. It is absolutely unconscionable to ask someone to live on \$1,000 a month or, heaven forbid, if you are on Ontario Works, \$599 a month in the province of Ontario. It is not right, and every single Liberal knows it's not right. If you had \$500 million, you could make sure that at least something was being done.

We have suggested capping CEOs' salaries. This is not going to make a lot of money, but it is hugely popular as well. Again, from that same Toronto Star article, later on down the article, because they also asked about this: "The survey also found strong support for Horwath's proposal to cap provincial executive salaries at \$418,000 a year—or twice the Premier's pay. About two-thirds—65%—approve of that, with only 22% opposed and 13% uncertain."

Again, what we are having is a huge, huge popular thing that the people of Ontario want. If you do that, you're going to save some \$20 million. If you look at this, if you look at capping the salaries, what you're going to do as well is you're going to make sure that some people, those who are right at the trough, those who are CEOs of some of the bigger hospitals in this province, actually earn only twice as much as the Premier. I note two of the examples that easily come to mind are—well, one is a hospital and one is OPG. There's Mr. Mitchell of the OPG, who last year got a raise of \$495,000—a raise of \$495,000. This would put an end to that kind of stuff. That's more money than most people earn in 10 years—that was his raise. I think he was earning \$1.7 million at public expense. Then you've got just a little hospital in eastern Ontario which also came to mind, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, where the raise there for their CEO, Mr. Bilodeau, was \$73,000, which is twice the average industrial wage of a person working in Ontario. We want to make sure that the cap stops all of that and that the money is funnelled back into better health care.

The fifth thing we wanted to talk about is \$100 million to put towards local health care where needed. Those monies would come both from taxing those who can afford it and from capping the salaries.

The sixth thing we looked at that won't cost the government any money but surely will make sure that there's

far less scandals in this province is whistle-blower protection. We want to do this for any organization that receives more than \$1 million in public funds. If this kind of whistle-blower protection was out there in places like Ornge, we wouldn't have an Ornge. If this whistle-blower protection was out there in public institutions, we wouldn't be standing here in the Legislature day after day decrying the fact that people are wasting government funds and that the government itself does not have a good ear to it and isn't paying appropriate attention to it. We want to make sure that every single public dollar spent is spent wisely.

The seventh thing we want to do is to look at job creation. We want to have tax credits for job creation, just like Mr. Obama is recommending in the United States. But also, just like Mr. Santorum was talking about before he dropped out of the race for the Republican Party, when you give money to industry, it can't be just government corporate welfare to industry—it has to be tied to job creation. We are suggesting this as well. This doesn't cost anything. You're already giving \$3 billion a year away. It's going to save money and it's going to create jobs. We demand to be listened to on this particular file.

1650

The next thing we talked about was an electricity review, and I had to chuckle a little over the government's attempt at this yesterday. It was half-hearted. It was two tiny little corporations that are probably way overblown in their corporate salaries. I noticed that one of them only had 143 employees, and over 100 of them were on the sunshine list. There it is.

We have to do something about the electricity review. I commend the government for starting the process yesterday, but a whole lot more needs to be done. We are asking that that be done, too, and a greater role for public power companies.

We are asking that the Ontario Northland be saved, that it remain in public ownership. The Ontario Northland is the lifeline for everyone who lives above the French River. It is the lifeline if this province is really serious about developing the Ring of Fire. It is the lifeline of people who want to travel and who do not have an automobile, who live north of the French River, to travel to see their friends and family, to travel to doctors' appointments, to come south. It is the lifeline for companies. It is the lifeline for people who live in Moosonee, Moose Factory, and it could and should be expanded if we are serious about northern development. If we are serious about the possibilities of our north, then one of the things not to do is to get rid of that railway. We know—and you know—that it's impossible to build highways in much of the north once you get where the permafrost is going to wreck them up. That's why there are no highways and roads into the First Nations communities at this point, and we know that taking out the only lifeline that some of them have is the wrong thing to do.

Last but not least, we've talked about the horse racing industry. Surely the government should have given more

thought than what they did. Oh, I know it's tempting for government to look over and say, "The horse racing guys get 10% of the rake-off of the slots revenue. We can take that 10% and we can use it." It was a pretty good deal that the government gave them, but they have stood up to that deal every single inch of the way. They have done exactly what they were supposed to do. They let their facilities be used in order to collect the revenue so that the government of the day, an NDP government, a Conservative government and a Liberal government all took advantage of this so that the slots would go into those racetracks, the racetracks would be kept alive and the horse owners would have a job.

The government walks in there without even a thought. I firmly believe, even if the government doesn't, even if the government pooh-poohs it, that there are 60,000 jobs at risk—not just those who breed horses, not just those who train horses, not just those who ride horses or exercise horses, but also those who provide the feed, the veterinary services, the parimutuels, the tracks, the trailers. All of those things are—not just to say they're gone; that's 60,000 people who aren't going to have a livelihood. That's 60,000 potential people who are going to end up on the welfare rolls. What are they supposed to do? These are people who have spent their entire life around farm animals. These are people who don't have, by and large, university educations. They may or may not be computer literate, but they have a talent that has put Ontario to the top of North America for horse racing and for breeding and all the other things. Surely something should be done.

We as New Democrats are putting this down. It's not a gauntlet; it is a firm statement. The government has brought forth a budget with which we do not agree. It can be made so that we agree with it. It takes only a little bit of political will over there, and that political will must be forthcoming. New Democrats are not afraid of an election. We are not. Perhaps the government should be, and you should be taking a very hard look at what we're asking for, which is going to cost less than one half of 1% of the total budget revenue, and do the right thing. We ask you to do it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I want to thank the member for his very thoughtful speech and for once again having by far the most decorative tie in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. He has, each and every day, a new and different tie, and they're all absolutely excellent.

One of the challenges that you run into—and I, first of all, appreciate the approach that the NDP has taken. I notice that you're not yelling in the House. You're not banging desks. You're not going wild. You're not putting on shows. You're asking thoughtful questions, and hopefully you're getting answers which, from time to time, you find yourself in agreement with, but other times you may not.

So I want to, first of all, like the approach of making some suggestions instead of simply rejecting the budget

out of hand, as the Conservative Party—and it's their will to do so, and it's their right to do so. I think it's a big mistake.

An interesting dialogue is taking place. In the context of that, I would like you to go to a book by Janice MacKinnon, who was Minister of Finance in the province of Saskatchewan. It's called *Minding the Public Purse*. What it portrays is what a person has to do when in government. I was in opposition a long time, and I know it's much easier, in opposition, to offer suggestions and make criticisms. That's an important part of the process, and I appreciate that. For instance, in Saskatchewan they had to close 52 rural hospitals. Were they a mean government? They certainly weren't. Were they a government that didn't care about health care? That's certainly not the case. But they had to go through that process. I remember reading that particular chapter in the book and how difficult it was.

We appreciate many of the suggestions that have been made. We're taking into account those suggestions, trying to cost them out, trying to find a balance, I think, that the people of this province are looking for. I do want to pay tribute to the third party for their approach.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to add a couple of comments, as I listened carefully to the member for Beaches—East York.

A few moments ago, I talked about key numbers in the budget and mentioned the question of the number of unemployed people in the province. Another number that I think is a really important one is the amount of money that it costs to service the debt.

Sometimes people have difficulty understanding what's the deficit and what's the debt. When the books don't add up, then you throw the leftover debt that you can't match and you put it in the debt pile. Today we're looking at a cost of servicing of over \$10 billion, and by the government's own reckoning, that is scheduled to increase in the next two fiscal years in the medium outlook. I think that people need to understand—I'm sure they have difficulty understanding what's \$10 billion—how much that reflects on things you can't afford because the debt has to be serviced. It's like feeding the monster in the back of the room. It means that it's more than what is spent in several ministries combined. It means that for every dollar that goes into that pile, you can't provide any kind of program; you can't find savings. It's a constant drag. That's just one more number that people need to understand in this budget.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I want to say thank you to our member from Beaches—East York for a thoughtful and provocative presentation. As finance critic, he does an incredibly good job. Way to go. Really, what he did was delineate the choice that this government across the aisle has to make, and that is, will they stand with us and the vast majority of ordinary Ontarians or will they stand



with the Conservatives who constantly want to cut corporate taxes and stand with the wealthy? The question is, where do they want to stand?

We put forward a number of proposals. Our leader, Andrea Horwath, stood up today and made some impressive comparisons, and they're important comparisons. Do you stand with those who make over half a million dollars a year, or do you stand with those who are on social assistance? Do you stand with those who need child care, or do you stand with those who make over half a million dollars a year? Do you stand with large corporations, as you have in the past, or do you stand for education and health care and the services that we value in this province? That's the real question. That is the question.

Again, the proposals we've made are practical ones. They've been costed out. They're modest ones in the great scheme of the possibility of proposals.

1700

Truly, the government has a choice. The choice is, are they in fact Conservatives or are they those who represent those people—who elected a minority government, by the way—not a majority one; a minority government—who wanted collaboration, wanted the best ideas from all parties, wanted us to work together? Will this government work with us, and through us, with the people of Ontario, or will they stand with those, really, who make over half a million dollars a year and are forever wanting tax breaks without being willing to share the tax burden? That's what we're saying as New Democrats. We want an answer.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** There's no doubt about it: The member from Beaches–East York—in the almost nine years I've had the privilege to be here, I think he's been their finance critic over those nine years—is an individual who knows the public finances of the province of Ontario extremely well. I always recall he used to tell us that first thing in the morning he would watch CBC Newsworld to see what was happening in the markets, both here and around the world. So he is taking a very serious interest in the domestic, national and international economy, which is very important when you're a finance critic.

He was, of course, the last mayor of East York, and as a former municipal—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** And a good mayor at that.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** And a good mayor at that. As you know, Mr. Speaker, when you're in municipal politics in the province of Ontario, municipalities can't run a deficit by law. You always have to have your books balanced in municipalities across the province of Ontario, and the member from Beaches–East York comes from that very fine municipal tradition.

He also took the time today, I think in a very articulate fashion, to kind of lay out a number of policy options that I could say we're taking very seriously and taking into great consideration over the next number of days, to look at them from the broadest perspective. It's no secret

there's a poll that appeared, I think in the *Globe and Mail* today, that talked about increasing the marginal rate of taxation of those individuals who make half a million dollars or more in the province of Ontario. I'm just going by recall. I think it was almost 68% to 70% that—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's 78%.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Seventy-eight per cent—thank you very much, member from Essex—indicated that that was a public policy that people in Ontario want to support, so I want to thank the member for his speech this afternoon.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Beaches–East York, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'd like to thank my colleague the Minister of the Environment and my colleagues the members from York–Simcoe, Parkdale–High Park and Peterborough for their comments and for actually listening to what I had to say.

A couple of things here: The member from York–Simcoe talked about servicing the debt, and I want to assure her that what we costed out will actually make the government money, because after today, when we withdrew one of our key planks in order to facilitate further discussion and hopefully some bending from the government, there is actually going to be money left over, and when you take an extra half a billion dollars and don't spend it all, that can't be a bad thing in terms of the debt.

I want to say to the member from Peterborough: Yes, it's true that when I was the mayor we could not run a deficit. But I tried to do one other thing; that is, we paid down every single debt the municipality had in the five years up until the very last payment was about to be made, when we got amalgamated. So, by the time of amalgamation we were debt-free, because I also understand that has to happen. That is why I supported the private member's bill today to try to pay down the debt each and every year, because if you don't, you're going to end up with a lot of expenses.

I am mindful of what the Minister of the Environment had to say about minding the public purse, and we all need to do that. We cannot spend more than we have, and we have to be very careful. But we as politicians have choices. There are choices out there of things that can be done, and we are taking a very responsible and publicly favourable position of taxing those who can afford another 2%.

I'm not going to say that the guy who wrote about the Visigoths in the *National Post* today—I don't think he has anything right; he doesn't even know his history. But if the only answer is that people are going to cheat and steal, so therefore don't do it, that's the wrong answer. We have to trust that we will get that money and that we will spend it in an appropriate way for the benefit of the people of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to have 20 minutes this afternoon to speak on the budget motion. I feel the need,

I guess, to begin by apologizing to my constituents. I had a two-minuter on this yesterday, and I announced in that two-minuter that I was going to be speaking in about 20 minutes' or an hour's time. That was yesterday, Wednesday, the 18th. What has been occurring for quite some time in this place occurred again yesterday, where one of the members of the official opposition chose to ring the bells to adjourn the debate. Unfortunately, that has been occurring on quite a regular basis here over the last period of time.

It's interesting to discuss, I would suggest, given that there is not a more important debate that takes place in this Legislature on an annual basis than the debate on the budget, and yet that particular member, as well as other members of the official opposition, felt it was okay to ring the bells and severely limit the amount of time that we have in this Legislature to speak on the budget motion. As I've already said, there is not likely a more significant or important debate that occurs in this Legislature on an annual basis. So instead of being able to speak to my constituents on this issue yesterday, it's now a day later.

It's after 5 o'clock here in Toronto, Thursday afternoon, April 19. That's relevant, Speaker, because less than a month ago we introduced our budget, on March 27, here in the Legislature. As I've said, it's now April 19. On Tuesday of next week, April 24, we will be back here and it is at that time that we will learn, clearly, whether or not the two opposition parties, the Conservatives and NDP, will vote as one and defeat our budget on Tuesday, plunging Ontario into an election some six or six and a half months after the last one, in early October 2011. There are still a lot of people in my riding, I would suggest, that are not aware that this is a possibility, so I think it's important that I take a minute just to speak to that.

On October 6, 2011, we were given a mandate, albeit a reduced mandate, to govern in the province of Ontario, but nevertheless that is only some six and a half months ago. The cost of an election, I'm told, is anywhere from \$100 million to \$150 million. So we will learn, as I've said, on Tuesday next week if the two opposition parties, Conservative and NDP—and if there was ever a strange marriage, that might be considered one—will vote as one and defeat our budget.

I would say as well, Speaker, on that issue, that we find ourselves in a minority Parliament, and of course that's why the two opposition parties can vote on this particular budget as one and defeat it and put us into an election. You can't help but appreciate the distinction that is here now. I wonder, what is it that they are going to suggest—if they do vote us down—was in this budget or was not in this budget that was so egregious, so severe, as to substantiate and defend their decision to send us to an election after only six and a half months? I think it's a question that constituents in all ridings across the province will be asking their members, should we be on the campaign trail come Tuesday or Wednesday of next week. I know it's one that I will be speaking very clearly to, should we find ourselves in an election.

On the Conservative side, the main piece I'm hearing back from the Conservatives is that they're not satisfied with the budget deficits and the budget balance position we find ourselves in. I would remind them and my constituents and those people in Ontario who are interested in this issue that in the election in October 2011, their campaign commitment at that time was exactly the same as ours: to bring the province back into a balanced position by 2017-18—exactly the same position as ours. This budget is the first step in that process, yet they seem to find themselves now taking a position that is opposed to where they were in the election just six or seven short months ago.

On the NDP side, they have taken a bit of a different approach. They have said, "We're not ready to vote against it immediately. We're going to go out and consult and listen to what people in Ontario have to say." I will say I've had a couple of people in my riding who have been consulted by the NDP on this issue and asked me why it is that the NDP are asking for their postal code when they are doing that particular consultation. I suppose we all have our own thoughts on what that might be about. Nevertheless, a slightly different approach: They are promoting, I would say, some tangible ideas that we are seriously giving consideration to, some that I think many of us over here find common ground with, some not so much. We'll see where that lands.

I'm not sure if the members of the third party and the leader of the third party are finished with their proposals or not. I think we're hoping at some point we'll be able to say, "This is it," and we will take them en masse and make a determination as to how we go forward on them, but it's nice to see a slightly different approach.

1710

My final point before I get into my main remarks is that it is interesting, the dynamic that exists in a minority Parliament. I've been here since 2003 and have been fortunate to be in government—as many know, that's more difficult—but not only in government, in a majority government. But now in a minority we're finding that all of a sudden it's a little bit more difficult actually, I would suggest, for the members of the opposition. When you are in opposition and it's a majority, it is much easier to champion every cause in your riding. It is much easier to make—

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order, the member from Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Is quorum present?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would the table please verify we have quorum?

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** A quorum is present. Member from Thunder Bay.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Yeah. It's pretty thin ranks over there in the opposition benches. Our side seems to be holding up its part of the bargain.



As I was saying, it's a little bit easier when you're in opposition when it's a majority government because now, of course, the votes and the decisions made by both of the opposition parties have consequence.

I started my remarks by saying, should they vote on Tuesday together, the Conservatives and the NDP, to send us into an election six short months after the last vote on October 11, this will have serious and significant consequences. It is, in fact, the central point that they will have to defend on the campaign trail.

So I would say, going forward, that it was easier for them in the past to criticize, to champion all causes and to go out and scream and yell and vote against everything—not quite as simple for them now. It's interesting to watch some of the gymnastics that go on in this place as people start to stake out their territory and their turf.

One example I could give on that is the fact that when we were a majority government, we received a tremendous amount of criticism from the NDP on a particular piece of legislation, the Far North Act. That's when we were a majority and they could oppose everything.

What we saw a short time ago was a private member's bill introduced by a member of the official opposition, the Conservative member, on the Far North Act, to repeal it. Lo and behold, now that we are in a minority, the NDP understood that if they voted, it would be repealed. And guess what? Instead of criticizing us on that legislation, like they had for the previous two or three years, this time they voted with us to not repeal the Far North Act.

So it really does shine an interesting light on what goes on in this place and the differences that occur when you're in opposition to a majority government and when you're in opposition to a minority government. All of a sudden, sometimes, the positions that you held one week or one month or one year ago are not the same positions that you're able to hold when you find yourselves as part of a minority.

I want to talk a little bit about some of the things that are at risk, should this budget fail. The pieces I'm going to talk about initially are pieces that are specific to northern Ontario, to northwestern Ontario. Some of these are pieces that I'm very proud of, that personally I've worked very hard on, that our northern Liberal caucus over the last number of years has worked very hard on. We've had them included in this particular budget so that we could speak to the people of northern Ontario and let them understand that their concerns are still being addressed and that these programs that we've brought into place are protected in this budget. Should this budget fail, they are at risk of not being there when we return.

I'll talk to only three, four, five of them as quickly as I can. I'm down to only about 10 or 12 minutes.

I should say that the most recent numbers that just came out are showing Thunder Bay's unemployment rate at 5.2%. It is one of the best rates in the province. The unemployment rate in Thunder Bay has consistently, over the last three or four years, been one of the best unemployment rates in the entire province, and it speaks to a lot of what good is going on there. If I had more

time, I could speak to the particulars of that. I don't have that time today, but it's important that I share that with my community. We're doing pretty well, and I will say, on a relative basis in Thunder Bay, we're doing quite well in Ontario.

The first program that I want to talk about the NIER program, the northern industrial energy rebate program. That is a program that our Liberal caucus fought very hard for, and we brought that in to bring energy relief support to our large industrials. Now, this has been a point of contention for quite some time. I've spoken on this at length, and I say quite frankly that when individuals and parties speak about energy being the responsible reason or the fundamental reasonable for the collapse of the forest industry, it is the most vacuous, empty argument. I've been waiting to debate somebody one on one on that, and I've challenged people to that, for the last five or six years, and I've never had a taker on it. The argument does not stand up at all.

But it is one of the things we can do to help. So this particular program we've introduced, going into its third or fourth year now, provides \$20 per megawatt-hour reduction to the large industrial users, including the one in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, the former AbitibiBowater pulp and paper mill now called Resolute Forest Products—still there in the budget, at risk should this budget fail.

Another one that our northern Liberal caucus asked for and succeeded in achieving—I will say on this one, the Ontario clean energy benefit, this came back in the Drummond report, and Mr. Drummond recommended that this Ontario clean energy benefit be removed. I don't mind saying I disagreed with Mr. Drummond on this. We had worked very hard to get it. That Ontario clean energy benefit is the 10% reduction that people are getting off of their monthly electricity bills every month. That started on January 1, 2011, and has been in place now for some 15 or 16 months.

A third piece that I want to talk about that we've protected in this budget is the northern Ontario heritage fund. I will say, when the NDP were in government, this particular fund disappeared. They took it into general revenue, took \$60 million away from northern Ontario and put it into the consolidated revenue fund. Not only have we not taken that approach, we took that \$60 million over the last three years, and we've increased it to \$100 million. It is having a tremendous impact on job creation in northern Ontario, and not only that; we're keeping it. It would have been easy to take that \$100 million out. We've kept it. It's in this budget. It's secure, but it's at risk should we go to the polls again.

Northern highway program: We have been spending at record levels over the last three to four years as a Liberal government on northern highways. Previous to our election, the peak was \$250 million. We peaked at about \$770 million one year. I think the last two years we've been around \$650 million, \$680 million. The four-laning project in Thunder Bay that people have been asking for for 25 years between Thunder Bay and Nipigon is going

forward. We've protected all those projects that have been announced. They're protected in this budget. If we go to the polls, that's at risk.

One that I've worked very hard on, Speaker, is a conversion of a coal plant in Atikokan. All parties in the 2003 election committed to closing coal. None of them ever said anything about keeping them open in any other shape or form. I've worked very hard on that. It's an expensive project. We're moving forward with it; we're converting it to biomass. It's a great project. I would suggest to you very clearly that that's at risk if we go to the polls again.

Speaker, there are many more projects that we have done, northern-Ontario-specific, that I don't have time to speak to. I'm down to about seven and a half minutes.

I want to talk about some of the things that are being put out there. Yesterday, I was here when the leader of the third party was speaking, and she was talking a bit about the Ring of Fire. Almost offhanded, not directly, she just throws it out there: "If we're mining ore in Ontario, we need to process ore in Ontario." Well, who wouldn't love to do all of that, Speaker? Wouldn't we all love to keep all of it here?

The reality is, that ore has been allowed to leave Ontario for 25 or 30 years. In fact, when the NDP were in power—and the leader would know this, and I would expect that the two members of the NDP that are here would know this. When they were in power, they also were doing OICs, orders in council, allowing ore to be shipped out of the province of Ontario. I say that to the people in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan because, should the NDP and the Conservatives force an election next week, this would be a plank in their platform; I have no doubt. It's important for the people in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan to know that when they were in power, they did it.

Do you know what, Speaker? There's good reason for it. If you're a small mine like Lac des Îles in northern Ontario, you're taking ore out of the ground, but you're small enough that you probably can't afford to build your own smelter. So what do you do? You have to go to the other guy, the big guy who's got it. So you go to Xstrata or the guy in Sudbury who's got the big smelter. He could hold you up. He could charge you a lot of money that you can't afford, or maybe he doesn't have the capacity in his smelter for what he's pulling out of the ground.

So if we took this very simplistic approach offered by the third party, the NDP, it could actually become a significant job killer in the province of Ontario. Do you know what bothers me the most, Speaker? They know that. The Lac des Îles mine, as an example, quite possibly could have had to make a decision, if all of their ore always, forever into the future, had to be mined in Ontario, not to open the mine in the first instance, because maybe you don't have the capacity, you can't afford to build your own smelter, or the other guy who's got a smelter in Ontario holds you up and he makes it so expensive you can't afford to operate anyway.

1720

I close by saying, Speaker, that the third party, the NDP, know this. That's why, when they were in government from 1990 to 1995, through order in council, their cabinet signed it off and they said, "Yes, here you go. Take it out. We understand. We know why you have to ship ore out of Ontario."

We would all love to keep it here, and we do our best.

It's my belief, on the Ring of Fire issue, on a go-forward basis, we're going to see some wonderful announcements related to that project and a whole host of other mining-related initiatives in northern Ontario in the very near future. I really do believe that's going to happen.

So I just felt the need to address that because, Speaker, if you're around here long enough, you can see what's coming, and it's a bit disingenuous, I would say, the way it's being put out there that they're the champs. Man, I could go on about what they did when they were in government. We could talk about Elliot Lake and what happened to Elliot Lake and the decisions they made. Again, there was good reason for it.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Isn't Bob Rae your leader?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** There was good reason. The member knows that.

You can't have it both ways, Speaker. You can't suck and blow at the same time. You have to take a position.

So I thought, on the Ring of Fire and the smelting and mining and everything 100% in Ontario, I needed to speak to that. From 1990 to 1995, when the NDP allowed ore to go out of this province to other jurisdictions, there was good reason, we understood it, and that's why from time to time it still occurs.

Currently, today, in Ontario, if they did it tomorrow, you'd probably lose 1,000 jobs, because right now ore comes from Quebec into Ontario to be smelted here. For whatever the reasons may be in Quebec—they don't have the capacity, or they can't afford it, or you're a small mining company who doesn't have a smelter in Quebec—you ship it to Ontario.

So there are reasons, Speaker. These policy pieces sometimes take a little longer to explain than we have when we're doing the 10-second sound bites on the radio, but there's good reason for them sometimes. That's why I'm pleased to have had this opportunity to speak to that particular piece today, because you can see what's coming.

Speaker, here are a few of the other things that are at risk that I want to talk about. In this budget, as has been our practice since 2003, our priorities have remained, quite clearly on a regular basis—and I think this is acknowledged even by the opposition parties—health care and education. That has been consistent.

In my own riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, and for the communities in my riding outside of Thunder Bay–Atikokan—Conmee, O'Connor, Gillies, Neebing, Oliver Paipoonge—they all understand and recognize the enhancements we've made.



One of the projects that I'm most proud of is the angioplasty program at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences hospital. We're seeing 800 to 1,000 people a year get that service in Thunder Bay now. Before, all of those people, every year, had to be shipped to southern Ontario. That was an investment in health care dollars that shows incredibly strong, tangible results for the people in my riding.

On health care more generally, right across the province, this is protected in the budget. I'm not talking about things that we haven't already done or that we're promising to do. These are things, Speaker, that we've already done. I'm saying these things into the record today because it's my belief that some of these things are at risk, should the NDP and the Conservatives vote to bring the government down on Tuesday.

In health care today in the province of Ontario, there are 3,400 more doctors working than when we were elected in 2003. There are approximately 12,000 more nurses working today in Ontario than when we were elected in 2003. We have the lowest surgical wait times in the entire country.

Speaker, on the family doctor piece, northern Ontario communities like mine have been chronically underserved when it comes to the provision of primary care. Many people are what were called orphaned patients. There are thousands more people in my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan today who have access to a doctor or a nurse practitioner than was the case when we were elected in October 2003—thousands more. There are still some—I get the calls at my office—who don't have a primary care provider, but we've made great strides.

These are not small numbers: 3,400 more doctors, 12,000 more nurses. About two million people in the province now have a primary care provider who didn't when we were elected, as I said, including thousands more in my riding.

Finally, on education—I'm running out of time—13,700 more support staff work in our schools in the province of Ontario; 8,500, up to maybe 10,000 more teachers, and if you're a young teacher out there, you're one in this number. Out of that 8,500 to 10,000 more teachers—the young teachers: You're one of those people.

Two hundred thousand more spaces, with 60,000 more to come, in our colleges and universities—accessibility to our post-secondary institutions. The knowledge-based economy is coming. We're making it available.

Speaker, all of these things are at risk, should the two opposition parties, on Tuesday, decide to send us back to the polls.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan makes some very cutting remarks with respect to the NDP and the Conservatives.

I want to put one thing on the record, and this is sort of an announcement—you could take this as a press release.

I believe, from listening today and to question period in the last couple of days, that there has been a secret backroom deal by the Liberals and the NDP. You should know, there's a secret deal.

The vote on the budget is next Tuesday at 11:30, and I'm speaking to the TV audience now. There will be a vote at that time, and I'm telling you now, it's a done deal. There's a secret backroom deal between Dalton McGuinty and Andrea Horwath. This is a done deal. This is all smoke and mirrors. The only person really standing up on behalf of the people of Ontario to stop the hemorrhaging of debt and deficit is Tim Hudak.

**Interjection:** It's John O'Toole.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, it's Tim Hudak. I want to put one thing on the record—

**Interjection.**

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's not me, Mr. Speaker.

This late in the day, on a Thursday, of all days—here it is. I'm reading—these are third party comments. It says, "The Ontario"—

**Interjection.**

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Pardon me. They're speaking over there. They can't hear me.

This is from the Financial Post. It's dated March 29, and the title is "Ontario Budget 2011: Not Credible." I'll go on here to what they say. "The unfortunate reality for Ontarians"—the government says they have a good record.

"For starters, since being elected in 2003, Premier Dalton McGuinty and his colleagues have proven inadequate at managing Ontario's finances. Our recent study, Measuring the Fiscal Performance of Canada's Premiers, found that Mr. McGuinty performed worst among 10 provincial Premiers at managing the government's spending, tax policy, and deficits and debt."

The people of Ontario should know that it's not credible. That's the whole story. I want you to vote with us and vote with Tim Hudak.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I would like to respond to the comments from the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

He spoke about the consultation that we're having. The public is happy that we're actually having consultation. The Liberals chose not to have any hearings on the budget, and certainly the public has told us that they're not happy with the fact that they weren't consulted by the Liberal government. He also talked about us asking for postal codes. We didn't ask for addresses. We asked for postal codes, because we wanted to know what area of the province people were actually from.

I find it interesting that the member is really picking on the NDP in his comments, and I want—

**Interjection:** He does that all the time.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I wonder if it was because the results of the last couple of elections were so close between the NDP and the Liberals, and the Conservatives really aren't in that picture.

He also talked about positions changing from a minority to a majority government. But those positions also changed from your party platform when you were campaigning, as they did with the Liberals, to today when we're in a minority situation, or even when they went from a majority to a majority. I talk about the housing issue and their promises that they failed to keep.

He also talked about nurses that they hired in the province, but in fact 2,000 nurses got laid off in this province in 2011-12, and there are more to be laid off with this 0% budget to the hospitals. So we're going to have more job losses in the health care sector.

He also talked about the impact of health care in communities. The impact in my community is devastating: a \$4.5-million cut to the Niagara Health System.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the comments.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

1730

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I was in the House for most of the speech of the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, and look, we heard his passion this afternoon on his private member's bill in order to create more jobs in the forestry industry in the province of Ontario. He's a guy who has passion. He articulates the needs of those constituents in his riding in northwestern Ontario. In fact, I want to share a little story.

You may recall this past Monday that Bombardier had a reception right here at Queen's Park. The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan single-handedly helped to revive that Bombardier operation in Thunder Bay. You know, I was told that it was on its last legs, down to—what?—300 or 400 workers. Last Monday, we heard in the report from the executives from Bombardier that has grown to 1,400 workers providing streetcars and subway cars right here in Toronto. That was the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan being a champion for the good people up there in Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

You know, when you get the time to travel to Thunder Bay, Ontario, there's a buzz in that community, and the buzz has been created by that member working in the field of post-secondary education, in the medical field, health care, providing new highly paid jobs—CAW jobs; Ken Lewenza at that Bombardier operation.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** He was in St. Catharines last night.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** He was in St. Catharines last night singing the praises of the member from St. Catharines. There are 400 new jobs there at that transmission plant, General Motors in St. Catharines. I know when we provided the transition dollars for General Motors we saved the pension of the member for Durham, and that's very important for him. We want to look after him.

**Interjection:** Well, he doesn't have an MPP pension.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** He doesn't have an MPP pension, but we saved his General Motors pension.

But in all seriousness, the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan is doing a heck of a job.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** I'm somehow not surprised that Ken Lewenza was in St. Catharines with the member from St. Catharines the other day. I'm just wondering if Pat Dillon was there as well for dinner. Just asking.

You know, when we're talking about the budget, we've got to talk about the size and cost of government, and there are a few things that weren't addressed in this budget. What we find when we look at the budget is that it does nothing but put window dressing on a lot of things and asks to explore and to expand and to study—really short on actions. What we really need are actions, and clearly this is short on actions for jobs and for reducing the size and cost of government.

I happen to come from a city that has among the highest unemployment rates of all cities in Canada, right along with Windsor—bouncing off the bottom with Windsor. Only a few short years ago, Barrie was bouncing off the top. What has happened? We have seen a dramatic decrease in jobs, and there's nothing in this budget that shows the people of Barrie that there are going to be jobs coming or that there are jobs on the horizon. That is inappropriate, and that's why we can't support a budget that does nothing to help the people that I represent. Until it does, there's absolutely never going to be any support from this side, until there's actual real action that's tangible, that can be seen, that can be felt by the people who elected me to come here and fight for them, to get them jobs.

Reduce the size of government—we just see the growth of government and the spending. This budget actually increases spending by \$2 billion, and the debt, or the deficit is right where it was last year. I mean, really? We can't chip away at that just a little bit more and make it more manageable, be a little more responsible about it? It's not a real budget; it's an election platform. So who's busting for an election? I think I just need to look across the floor to figure that out.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, you have two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, thank you very much. I want to thank the members from Durham, Welland, Peterborough and Barrie for their comments.

The member from Durham is still here. I have to say, I don't know, once in a while, the member from Durham and I agree on things, but he always makes me smile. I've got to tell you, the member from Durham can always make you smile. He talked about some secret vote that occurred apparently between us and the members of the third party. I just want to let the member from Durham know that if there was a secret vote, I wasn't there, I didn't get invited to that meeting, so I'm not sure if it really occurred or not, but you apparently have some information that I'm not privy to. We're out of here very soon. Maybe you'll share it with me.



To the member from Welland, I would simply say on the consultation, congratulations; it's good. I think, as a government since 2003, we have consulted a lot. But as I said in this place not that long ago, I think we all run a risk of watching consulting and consultation become the new industry. Let's just be a little bit careful. At some point, we're elected to come here and we're elected to make decisions. There are people who get tired of new plans and they want to see some decisions that are made. I forget what the issue was that we were speaking on, and people were asking us to consult even more. That's fine; you're doing your job and you are taking your approach. At some point, the decision will be yours to make.

Member from Peterborough, thank you very much.

To the member from Barrie, I would say on the budget and what's contained in the budget that very much of what is there mirrors what your party and your leaders were advocating for in the election in October 2011. In fact, the date at which we intend to bring the province back into a balanced position is exactly the same date as you were putting forward in October 2011, in an election only six months ago. You exactly mirrored what we were going to do. So I'm not sure I understand completely the comment.

Speaker, a very serious vote coming up on Tuesday: The NDP and the Conservatives will decide if they're going to vote together as one and bring down this government: a \$100-million or a \$150-million election six months out. We will see on Tuesday, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I want to put an order here. This is government order number 2, resuming the debate from April 18 "that this House approves in general" the budget policies of the government. That's what this is about. Now, here's the issue: We have a significant problem

here. We can't support those things. There's a deficit and a debt.

We want to make sure the people of Ontario understand—the democratic process is the right to free speech. Now, we've called on the wasteful, scandalous spending on Ornge helicopters—billions of dollars. Frank Klees has raised this issue, and we've dealt with it, but we've called—and the Minister of Health was here—for a select committee to get to the bottom of this scandalous spending on Ornge helicopters. So with that uncertainty and lack of confidence in this government, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. O'Toole has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the debate be adjourned? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those against, please say "nay."

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This is a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1738 to 1808.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Can all members take their seats, please?

Mr. O'Toole has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour of the motion, please stand.

All those against, please stand and remain standing.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 8; the nays are 25.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion lost.

Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday, April 23, at 10:30 a.m.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House adjourned at 1809.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O. Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
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<b>Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough–Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
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Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland—Quinte West	
<b>Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
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Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga—Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener—Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	



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Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch











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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 23 April 2012

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 23 avril 2012

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 avril 2012

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to recognize two great agricultural organizations that are with us today in the Legislature: Dairy Farmers of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I enjoyed meeting with both of these groups this morning. I hope all members will join the dairy farmers for their reception following question period in room 228, and the OFA this afternoon in room 230. I'd like you to all welcome the two organizations here this morning.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I would also like to welcome my former colleagues and still current friends from Dairy Farmers of Ontario and invite you to their hospitality at noon. Thank you.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'd like to take a moment to welcome Steve Jones, president and CEO of Prostate Cancer Canada, who is joined by the PCC board of directors and leaders of the PCC regional teams. As a prostate cancer survivor, I have a particular appreciation for these good people and the work they do.

I'd also like to join my colleague in welcoming the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, particularly Bill Emmott, the chair; and Peter Gould, the general manager; and of course the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, who are joining us this morning—Larry Freeman, the zone 5 director in my home riding; Bette Jean Crews, past president; Joe Dickenson, director at large; Larry Davis, zone 3 director; and Ralph Brodie, zone 1—and finally, Mr. Speaker, a good friend of mine, Matt Jelly from Hamilton, a local community activist environmentally.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to welcome Henry Oosterhof, a dairy farmer from Leeds–Grenville. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to introduce Peggy Brekveld, who made it all the way from northwestern Ontario down here with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, as well as Ralph Brodie. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## WEARING OF TIES AND SCARVES

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I believe we have unanimous consent that all members of the Legislature be per-

mitted to wear ties and scarves in honour of Prostate Cancer Canada's first Queen's Park Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Unanimous consent has been asked. Do I have unanimous consent? I suspect that everyone knew that everyone was wearing blue.

## VISITORS

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like everyone to welcome the family of page Talin Mooradian, who is the page captain today: her mother, Tracey Mooradian; her dad, John Mooradian; her older sister and former legislative page, Ara Mooradian; and friend Cesar Razuri.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome the director of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Keith Currie, to the House today.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** We have some guests with us today representing the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. They represent over 900 in the US and 14 here in our Legislature. Those with us from the NCEL today are J.R. Tolbert, executive director from Washington, DC; Dennis Ozment, Great Lakes program coordinator from Minnesota; and Jane Krentz, Great Lakes program coordinator and former Senator from Minnesota. I invite you all to join them for their reception this afternoon, 4:30 to 5:30.

Thank you for being here, and welcome to the Legislature.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'd like to welcome from my riding today Debra Pretty-Straathof, who is also a director with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, visiting Queen's Park today. Welcome.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Ms. Cassandra Ruggiero. She's a vice-president of AIESEC, an international association of students helping students, and she's on her way to the UK to do just that. Welcome to Queen's Park. Mr. Speaker, she's also my goddaughter.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'd like to welcome Kelly Harris back to the Legislature. Kelly's from Central 1 Credit Union.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like every member of the Legislature to welcome my big sister Susan Houghton, who is visiting in the members' west gallery. Susan is in green. Great to see you, Susan. Thank you.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Monsieur le Président, je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue ici aujourd'hui à deux de mes commettants : M. Ronald Tourigny et son épouse, Gisèle, qui visitent Queen's Park aujourd'hui. Bienvenue.



**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to welcome His Excellency Ali Riza Guney, consul general of Turkey; Huseyin Nurgel, president of the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations; Umit Eruysal, president of the Turkish Culture and Folklore Society; Dr. Mehmet Bor, past president of the Turkish federation; Emre Dodanli, a student; and Nalan Dodanli, a teacher. They are visiting the House today and are having a reception on the occasion of International Children's Day at the House, and every member is welcome to attend that event.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** It is my privilege to introduce Warren Scott, district 5 vice-president, in the west gallery. He's representing the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, always fighting to find a cure for cancer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On behalf of the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan and page Sarah McPherson, her sister, Mary McPherson, is here this morning in the public gallery. We welcome her.

We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Québec, Monsieur François Ouimet. Please join me in welcoming François, a good friend of mine.

#### SPEAKER'S WARRANT

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I have a ruling for us. I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a copy of my warrant, issued in accordance with the adoption of the House of April 19 of the report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts respecting testimony of Dr. Chris Mazza, which was delivered in person, on my order, by the Sergeant-at-Arms on April 20, 2012.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. We believe that the core function of any good government is to spend money wisely, to get value for every single tax dollar and only buy as much government as you need, while creating the right environment for job creation in the private sector in our province. So your budget is a dramatic failure. The deficit goes up, not down. You have no plan for job creation. Basically, Minister, over the last seven months, you've been treading water with no action on the debt, no action on jobs. The Ontario PC caucus stands proudly opposed to this budget because it won't create jobs and it increases spending in the province of Ontario beyond what we can afford.

Minister, given that you've done nothing for the last seven months, will we see another plan, or is this all you have to offer?

#### 1040

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Our plan creates jobs, it reduces the deficit, it builds on important public services—including full-day learning and keeping class sizes smaller—and it focuses on keeping our surgical wait times low, as we move back to balance in a timely and orderly fashion. We think it's the right plan. It is going to help move us forward while we protect the important gains we've made across a variety of very important public services.

We fundamentally disagree with the Leader of the Opposition. We think he's wrong. They would much rather raise class sizes, eliminate full-day learning. They have no plan to get back to balance. Even Mr. Drummond pointed out that their revenue projections were way out of whack. They want more corporate tax cuts. We want short surgical wait times. We want full-day learning. We fundamentally disagree. We want to make this Legislature work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The Ontario PCs want to see a return to balanced budgets in the province of Ontario, paying down debt and creating jobs in our province. It's amazing, Speaker: Every time I ask the finance minister or the Premier about reducing spending, they talk about how they're going to increase spending. That's the core problem with this budget. It does not take us off the track of a \$30-billion deficit. It keeps us on the path toward tripling the debt in the province of Ontario and has a breathtaking omission of no jobs plan whatsoever.

In 2003, you campaigned and said that the debt will only go in one direction: down. But, in fact, you're now on the path to tripling the debt in the province of Ontario. This is not good enough. Take another swing at it. Will you bring forth a plan that actually reduces spending, balances the books and then pays down the debt in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, the debt-to-GDP ratio went down in the first number of years of our administration. In fact, we balanced three budgets. In fact, we inherited a deficit from the previous administration which, according to the Auditor General, was a hidden deficit. We eliminated that.

Then, like countries throughout the world, we were hit by a very difficult downturn in the economy. We chose to make important investments in infrastructure. We chose, for instance, to keep companies such as General Motors and Chrysler alive and operating here in Ontario.

It's the right time that in fact gets us back to balance. It's a strong plan, and we're going to keep building on our important gains in health care and education while we move back to balance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Here's the essential problem with McGuinty Liberals' approach on this: First, they set extraordinarily weak and inadequate goals toward balancing the books or creating jobs, and then they lack the managerial confidence to even achieve those goals. They set

the bar extraordinarily low and then they fail to leap over that bar.

Time after time, this finance minister has failed to meet his targets. He's on track to what: three or four more double-digit deficits? And since the time he promised to reduce the debt—not debt to GDP; reduce the debt itself—we've seen that the debt is going to double by next year and is on track to triple by 2017. In fact, Ontario's deficit is greater than the deficits of all the other nine provinces combined. This is a dramatic failure. It's an illustration of extraordinary managerial incompetence.

Why don't you take another kick at it? Bring forward a plan that actually reduces, not increases, the deficit?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition that in the election he adopted our timeline for balancing the budget.

This party and the third party had discussions throughout the weekend to make the budget work. What was the Leader of the Opposition and his caucus doing? They were nominating candidates. They have now nominated 90 candidates. They have enlisted 75 campaign managers.

I would suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that he listen to the advice of the member for Kitchener-Conestoga, who was quoted as saying, "I always say that we almost can't afford not to have an election," and he's right about that.

I think you should have spent the weekend working with this instead of getting the campaign in gear. You're in debt, you're under water, your caucus is divided—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. We're working on it—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'll let the finance minister and the Premier talk about elections until they're blue in the face. We're talking about jobs. We're talking about moving our economy forward, making Ontario a leader again. What you seem to misunderstand is an important part of attracting jobs and investment to our great province is getting spending under control and giving that confidence to investors. But under your watch, sir, as finance minister, we've had two credit downgradings. Moody's has put it on negative outlook, and the Don Drummond report that was supposed to be your silver bullet basically was put on the shelf in record time. You never talk about his recommendations anymore.

We want to go a different direction. I know they're focusing like our economy is going over Niagara Falls in a barrel, as are our finances; they're focused on building a better barrel. We want to go in the opposite direction, Speaker. We want to move upstream, create jobs, get our books under control. Why won't you?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have seen more than 140,000 net new jobs in the last year, more than 300,000 since the bottom of the recession in 2009, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the day the Drummond report was put out in the public, the Leader of the Opposition said you can't cherry-pick the recommendations. Then three minutes later, he said, Mr. Speaker, to keep horse racing; keep subsidizing the horse racing industry. Don't follow Drummond's recommendation on the Niagara casinos.

He did say he wants to eliminate full-day learning. He wants to raise class sizes. He wants to lengthen surgical wait times. We just fundamentally disagree with that approach.

Last fall he adopted a 2017-18 timeline, which is the one we have. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to have it both ways. The good news is that caucus's party is irrelevant in this discussion because they'd rather have an election than a meaningful discussion on the budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You know, I think we should probably put out a missing persons alert for Don Drummond—supposed to be your silver bullet, and then you cast it aside all together. The problem is, Speaker, that they brought forward no plan whatsoever to get back on track. In fact, they're on the path to tripling our debt. They have no jobs plan. And not only do they set weak goals, but they fail to hit even those weak goals. It's extraordinary managerial incompetence we've seen in the last nine years, the Ontario Liberal Party.

Let me give you some examples: \$1 billion wasted at eHealth, \$700 million handed over to Ornge with no oversight whatsoever, \$1 billion in welfare overpayments, and Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. expense scandal after expense scandal, the LHINs, the Niagara Parks Commission. The list goes on and on. Why should we trust this government even to hit its meagre goals when it continues to mess up with extraordinary managerial incompetence?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition what Patricia Croft, the former chief economist of RBC Global Asset Management, said. She said, "I disagree with Mr. Hudak. He's talking about swift action, and swift action would mean a deep recession ... swift action in terms of cutting spending even further or raising taxes. So this budget" balances "austerity with growth. That's a very tough act but I think they've done a pretty good job."

Mr. Speaker, that party is irrelevant in this discussion. They're out nominating candidates. Nobody is listening to them. They want this Legislature to work. The Leader of the Opposition is bereft of ideas other than just to recalculate all the old nostrums that were inaccurate and were rejected by Ontario last fall.

Get down to work. Make the Legislature work. I challenge you to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** When you look at page 194 and 195 of your budget, it's clear that the McGuinty government



made its choice. You want to go down the path of higher spending. You want to go down the path of increased taxes. You want to go down the path of tripling Ontario's debt. And what, you want us to drive the getaway car? We're not for that, Speaker.

We want lower taxes. We want jobs in our province. We want to get spending under control. It's the right path. If this doesn't work, will you bring back a plan that truly does? We want to see Ontario as a leader again in this great country.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's nice to see he's finally read the budget, Mr. Speaker. You know, he got out of the press conference—and that's why nobody is paying attention to them except their own people on Twitter when they twit to congratulate Mr. Hudak on his nomination this week.

1050

It's unfortunate that they've neutered themselves in this debate. What they lost track of is that in fact Ontarians think this is the right budget. Now, there is room for some improvement. I applaud the leader of the third party, and the New Democrats for coming forward with constructive ideas to make it work better.

They've just been absent while they're out nominating candidates, borrowing money for the buses. It's unfortunate they chose that course.

We're going to stand with this budget. We're going to make changes to make it better because the people of Ontario want this Legislature to work. The only people they're creating jobs for are poll—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Leader of the third party

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Acting Premier. Would the Acting Premier agree that if the people of Ontario are going to accept this budget, they need to believe that it's fair for people like them?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we brought forward a budget that is fair and balanced, and we stand by that. It moves us back to balance according to the timelines that all three parties agreed to after the last election. It puts an emphasis on expenditure cuts. It does deal with revenue. We adopted the recommendation of the third party with respect to freezing the corporate tax rate, which we felt was an appropriate recommendation that made sense in the context of what's going on.

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the leader of the third party: Fairness is important in this process and indeed in any budget. We continue to work with her and her party to make sure that it is fair. I suspect where we might differ is on what is fair and what isn't, but we look forward to continuing to work with you today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Overwhelmingly we are hearing from people who say that that budget lacks fairness. One step we've asked the government to consider is asking very high-income earners to pay just a little bit more.

This government has hit families with unfair regressive taxes like the HST and the health tax. Why the hesitation around this simple proposal to make taxation in this province a little more fair?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We have moved on a number of areas that the leader of the third party has suggested. We thought those were appropriate. We are looking carefully at all of the recommendations, including the tax increase that she has proposed.

I'm proud of the fact that our tax system is in fact progressive. In fact, over the last three budgets, we've made it more progressive. We created and increased the Ontario child benefit. We reduced the rate of taxation on the first bracket of income so that it is more progressive.

We do have to move back to balance, according to the timelines outlined, while respecting the principle that the leader of the third party speaks of, and that is fairness, because it's not fair to our children and grandchildren if we don't deal with this problem.

We will continue to look at her ideas. We think they've been brought forward in very good faith. I think we all—at least two parties—want to make this Legislature work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In 2003, the Minister of Finance stood in this House and denounced "Tory tax boondoggles for the rich." He bragged that things have changed, reiterating that again. But now, after a decade in power, the government seems to have lost its way. Do they plan to stand with Conservatives or the people of Ontario, who are looking for a little more fairness?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think at the time I was referring to the generous tax cuts for the horse racing industry from the previous government. I would urge caution in going down that road because, again, we need to have some consistency in tax policy.

Again, we thank the third party for continuing the dialogue over the weekend. We accept the premise that we have to make sure this budget is fair. It has to be fair not only among people today but fair to people in the future, because of our interest and debt burden. But I think the leader of the third party is operating in good faith, and we continue to listen carefully to their suggestions.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Acting Premier. Fair's fair. During challenging economic times, it's even more important to share and share alike. I think Ontarians get that. The ultra-wealthy can afford to pitch in a little more to support vital services.

Donna from Cobourg advises, "The idea of having the \$500,000 [a year] wage earners pay more tax and helping out the struggling workers is great ... now stick by that."

New Democrats have been sticking by that, Speaker. Will the McGuinty Liberals?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I think fairness is important. For instance, we thought it was fair that we proceed with

full-day learning, and I think the leader of the third party agrees with us. We thought it was fair that we proceed with small class sizes, and I believe the leader of the third party agrees with that. It is fair that we are moving forward with the Ontario child benefit, a large tax cut for people of more modest means to support their families. We agree; I think she does. Home care: We agree. In fact, we've responded as best we can to her calls. I think she also agrees that we need to protect ODSP and improve child care. We've taken steps to that as well.

We look forward to the continuing dialogue. We appreciate the opportunity to have worked over the past weekend with the third party to make this Legislature work, to get us back to balance. I applaud her for working with us instead of nominating candidates and hiring—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's apparent from what the Acting Premier has to say that he would agree with me that this is not about ideology but it is about basic fairness. I think it's time for me to reiterate that if belts need to be tightened, then everybody should be feeling it.

Moirra from London writes, "They need to make those who are making incredible profits pay their fair share of taxes." Will the Acting Premier ask those making half a million dollars or more a year to pitch in a little bit extra to protect the services for the rest of us?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'm also pleased that we have been able to take some 90,000 Ontarians off the tax rolls entirely. I am pleased that we have been able to continue to build on our anti-poverty strategy, which is an important step forward as we make progress in reducing particularly child poverty in this province. There are a variety of initiatives in the budget that build on those initiatives as we move back to balance, and we will respond with respect to this proposal in due course. But I think it's important that we continue, as a Legislature, to work together, not just in this budget but throughout the coming weeks and months, to ensure that we continue to build a stronger Ontario as we move forward together.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Most Ontarians agree that the most fortunate among us have a role to play in making this budget fairer for their fellow citizens. John from Tecumseh writes, "Let those who have the ability to pay taxes pay more. Children need to be protected, health care needs to be enhanced." Scott from Whitby reasons, "Moderate tax increases for the people who make ... more (yes, that includes me) ... is a fairer approach." Some senior Liberals say that they would do it in a heartbeat. Will the finance minister and the Premier take their advice and make this budget fairer?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, it's pronounced "Tecumsee," but I'll say this: We discussed these matters among ourselves. We're a caucus full of bright, thoughtful people, all of whom want to move Ontario forward, and we believe that the leader of the third party does as well, and her caucus colleagues.

We look forward to arriving at a budget that is acceptable to this Legislature, that all of us can say is fair. We may not agree with all aspects of it—we will no doubt disagree on aspects of it—but I think, to her point about fairness and working together, we accept that.

I look forward to the discussions that have been going on all this past weekend continuing today. I think the people of Ontario want us here working instead of out nominating candidates, campaigning, raising money and spending money on lawn signs.

## ARBITRATION

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Last week, as Ontario's PC labour critic, I tabled legislation to reform Ontario's broken arbitration system. Your hand-picked economist Don Drummond made it quite clear that if you ignore one of his recommendations, you have to put another one on the table.

Our Trust in Arbitration Act echoes one of Don Drummond's key recommendations. This bill provides a real, strong legislative framework that makes arbitrators accountable to our province's ability to pay.

**1100**

Minister, you've never bargained with a union that you wouldn't coddle, and you've never seen a union wage you wouldn't raise. Will you support Bill 70 to reform Ontario's broken arbitration system?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** It's always a pleasure to hear from the honourable member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. I'm not sure if the member opposite has had a chance to read through the budget, but there is a section on interest arbitration. In that section, we do address the concerns that the member's party and various municipalities have raised with us over the last few months.

The budget proposes interest arbitration provisions that provide a focused, balanced number of reforms. The reforms include accountability, transparency as well as timeliness in the interest arbitration system. At the same time, these measures would preserve the essential independence of the arbitration process. The reforms would require interest arbitration when requested by a party to provide written reasons demonstrating that they've given proper consideration to the statutory criteria.

I recommend that the member opposite read the budget on the interest arbitration—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** More fluff and stuff from the minister.

Minister, the people of Ontario have no confidence that you or your partnership with the third party can rein in public sector wages because you always fail the people of Ontario. Our municipal partners, police service boards and small businesses have all begged you to fix an arbitration system that has increased public sector wages by 27% more than the private sector.



Minister, you asked for ideas, and we've provided them. The Ontario PCs have put forward a strong, mandatory wage freeze. We've tabled even stronger legislation to restore trust in our broken arbitration system.

Minister, you have never been able to look Don Drummond straight in the eye. Will the minister of big debts and short change support our strong legislation to reform Ontario's—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I offer a caution: The member referred to the minister in a way that is not appropriate or understood to be convention. I remind all members, please, either their riding or their ministry. Thank you.

Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Thank you, Speaker. As I stated in my first answer, our government's budget includes an item on interest arbitration provisions that provide a focused and balanced approach.

We're going to increase accountability. We're going to increase transparency. We're going to increase timeliness of the interest arbitration system. These are all things that I know the party opposite has been asking for, and yet you're going to vote against a budget and force Ontarians into an election that nobody wants. Ontarians don't want that unnecessary election and expensive process that puts our economy at risk.

I want to say to the member opposite, if you really want to see changes to the interest arbitration system, why not support the budget and spare Ontarians the unnecessary expense of an election?

Mr. Speaker, we support an impartial system that requires participation of both parties.

I recommend the member opposite try to put his interests aside, think of Ontarians and support the budget.

## JOB CREATION

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Acting Premier. It's clear the budget lacks a plan for people looking for work in this province. Minister, as you know, the unemployment rate in communities like Windsor-Tecumseh is in double digits, and nearly 25,000 people are looking for work in London.

New Democrats have proposed a tax credit that rewards companies that create jobs. Will the Acting Premier make the budget fairer for people and move forward with our job creation proposal?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I don't know if the member was at committee last week, but I know his colleagues who were there supported our initiatives to create jobs in southwestern Ontario by voting in favour of the southwest Ontario development fund. This Legislature will have an opportunity to vote for that very bill; something that's worked very well in eastern Ontario. Unfortunately, just like on the budget, the PC Party does not appear to be supporting jobs for southwestern Ontario.

We welcome support from the NDP, but we call on our colleagues across the aisle here to support jobs in southwestern Ontario, support investments in southwestern Ontario, by supporting this very important piece of legislation that will create exactly what the member is asking us to create today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Modelled after a plan by the Obama administration, our job creator tax credit would create more than 50,000 jobs.

It's not just that there isn't a plan to create jobs in this budget. Decisions like terminating the horse racing revenue-sharing program without any consultation will take a toll on jobs in rural Ontario. We propose that the government work with the horse racing industry with the goal of stabilizing that sector. Will we see a plan to retain jobs in rural Ontario today from the government?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I hear what the member is saying, but the people in southwestern Ontario want their southwestern Ontario development fund. The people in eastern Ontario want their eastern Ontario development fund. What they don't want is an unnecessary election that's going to stop us from being able to deliver jobs in southwestern Ontario, in eastern Ontario.

Last month alone, 46,000 net jobs were created in this province. The economy is going in the right direction. The last thing we want now, Mr. Speaker, is an unnecessary election that's going to make things unstable and slow down the economic growth that we're achieving.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Prince Edward-Hastings, come to order.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, we look to the NDP in the next few days to show leadership and pass the budget that's going to reduce the deficit and is going to create jobs in southwestern Ontario, eastern Ontario and the entire province.

## ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** My question is to the Minister of Government Services. Tomorrow we vote on our government's strong budget to help Ontario recover from the global recession and get back to balance. Ontario's budget for 2012-13 proposes extending the existing salary freeze for MPPs for another two years, for a total of five years. My constituents of Pickering-Scarborough East want all MPPs to show leadership on this and offer solutions in the best interests of Ontarians. I speak for all of my colleagues on this side of the House when I say that we are in public service because we want to make a difference in our communities and create a better Ontario for future generations. Speaker, could the minister please tell this House about the Premier's proposal?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member from Pickering-Scarborough East for asking this question. She is absolutely correct: These are tough economic times and in these tough economic times we are asking all of our partners, including the MPPs, to

do their part, but at the same time protect the priorities that are important to Ontarians, like health, education and creating jobs. That's why it's important for us all to work together to resolve the issues that we are facing right now. It's important that we continue to lead by example, so we are asking all MPPs to take two years of additional freeze in their salaries. That would be a total of five. It's not the easy thing to do, but it's the right thing to do and it shows leadership.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Ontario has elected us to protect public services, eliminate the deficit and work together for all Ontarians. I was very troubled to learn in the National Post last week that the PC member from Nipissing complained that his taxpayer-funded \$116,550 salary is too low.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member, I am going to offer this again generically. Government policy, please. Redirect your question, please.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Speaker, I'm talking about the MPP—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I did not stand for others to start. Redirect your question, please.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Speaker. We know candidates run for different reasons. I can tell you, I didn't run for a paycheck. Mr. Speaker, I am here for Pickering-Scarborough East to help deliver quality services for all Ontarians, not because of the size of the paycheck. This is about leadership. We are asking our public sector partners to do their part, yet some opposition members appear to have a problem with how much we all make. Could the minister please remind all members that a five-year MPP salary freeze as proposed in the budget is how we are leading by example to serve the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I want to thank the member for asking the question again. I have been in this Legislature for nine years and I am very impressed with the quality of the people in this Legislature.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

1110

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** We bring different perspectives. We come from different backgrounds. That's what enriches the experience in this Legislature.

Most of us got into the Legislature to make a difference and serve Ontarians. Providing leadership at this point of time to balance our budget is important. The member should be focusing on how we can address the issue of the deficit, how we can address our priorities, rather than talking about the salary at this point of time. So, Mr. Speaker, I will urge him that he knew exactly what the salary was before he got into the Legislature, and not talk about—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Now, I am going to make a statement here. These kinds of questions—and I have heard them from all sides—are

leading us to racing to the bottom. I'd rather us race to the top.

New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Deputy Premier: Thursday I asked you about the involvement of Don Guy, Dalton McGuinty's former chief of staff and election guru: about Don Guy's involvement in the ever-growing Ornge scandal. Friday, I received an intimidating letter from Don Guy's lawyer, insinuating legal action. I see this as a threat, an attempt to force my silence into the questioning of those involved in this scandal that plagues your government.

Deputy Premier, did anyone on the Premier's staff or anyone on your caucus direct or authorize Don Guy to intimidate an elected member of this Legislature?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Deputy Premier?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think it's about time that members on the opposition benches allow the committee to do its work. Mr. Guy, Don Guy, has been asked by the committee to appear in front of them. My understanding is that he has indicated a willingness to appear in front of the committee. I understand the clerk will be making arrangements for a number of witnesses to go forward. There is a list of witnesses. There are opportunities for opposition members and government members alike to ask questions of people and to get to the bottom of it.

Last week, I think the Deputy Premier spoke about an individual by the name of Kelly Mitchell, a very prominent member of the opposite member's party, an individual who we look forward to questioning. Again, there was a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Speaker. I think all concerned—we want to deal with this. I know the Premier to be an honourable man, so I'm sure he will take the opportunity to set the record straight and provide critical information.

My question, to whoever wants to answer: Can the Deputy Premier tell this House of any and all involvement of Don Guy in the Ornge file, in any way, any shape or form, while he served as chief of staff? Secondly, will you agree to table all emails and all documents pertaining to Don Guy's involvement on the Ornge file?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Government House leader?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** That's why we have a committee.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Exactly. As my friend the Minister of the Environment points out, that's why we have standing committees of this Legislature. That's why we have the public accounts committee, which is right now looking into the Ornge situation. They have requested that Mr. Guy come before the committee. It's my under-



standing he has spoken of his willingness to appear and they are right now trying to schedule him to come forward.

Last week, a motion was passed in this House to call Kelly Mitchell before the committee.

**Interjection:** Looking forward to that.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think most people, as my friend behind me says, are looking forward to hearing from him—a very, very prominent Conservative who apparently was paid \$400,000 by Ornge in order to lobby and schmooze with prominent members of the Progressive Conservative Party. I think we're looking forward to him answering questions at the committee—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre par intérim. The vast majority of community hospitals are facing cutbacks, and it's starting to have an effect. Niagara hospitals have to cut beds across the NHS because of a funding freeze delivered in this government's budget. At Health Sciences North in Sudbury, patients are concerned that the care they need will simply not be accessible to them.

Will the Acting Premier put local health care before millionaires?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I want to take this opportunity to actually say thank you to the people who work in our hospitals: our front-line workers, our nurses, our doctors, our environmental services staff; all of the people who make Ontario's hospitals amongst the best in the world.

We have invested enormously in hospitals in the eight years that we have been in government. This year, we made a very strategic decision to invest in home care. We know there are too many people who are in hospital beds who do not need to be there, who do not want to be there, who could go home if the supports at home were available.

We have made a strategic decision. We will continue to increase funding for hospitals, but the bulk of our new investments are in the home and community sector. I think that's where they need to be.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** There are more rural, northern and community hospitals facing the budget crunch. Élisabeth Bruyère health centre in eastern Ontario is looking at cutting rehab and palliative care beds, as well as the staff that goes with them.

Our modest tax increase for those who have taxable incomes of over half a million dollars would help make sure that those health care services remain in those communities. It is reasonable. It is responsible. It's the right thing to do.

Will the Acting Premier do the right thing and put front-line health care over millionaires?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Our action plan is very clear and very deliberate. We need to invest more in community care, more in home care. We have a finite amount of money that we can spend. Our decision to focus on home care and community care is the right decision. It is supported by such experts as Dr. Zalan in Sudbury. I know the member opposite is familiar with the work he is doing.

I can tell you that across the province, I have had very strong support for the initiatives in our action plan. We can do better, and I'm leading that change.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question. Member from Guelph.

### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, Speaker. My question, through you, is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I have recently read an open letter sent to you by the member for Oxford with regard to the Risk Management Program. Apparently, he is somewhat confused about the program.

I have been receiving very positive reaction to the budget from the agriculture stakeholder community because they are pleased about the continuation of the program for the 2012 crop year and the work that you have begun with stakeholders on a new iteration of the program for the 2013 crop year.

However, the letter alleges that farmers are confused about when changes to the program would take effect. Minister, could you please clear up the member for Oxford's confusion? Is the RMP capped for the 2012 crop year?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I want to thank the member for the question. It's certainly a very important question. I want to be perfectly clear in answering the question, as I have been with farmers and in discussions with my good friend the member from Oxford on this very point.

For the 2012 program year, the 2012 crop year, the program remains the same. Farmers are still enrolled in the demand-driven program they signed up for.

For the 2013 program year, as we announced in the budget, we are working with farmers to revise and enhance the program to bring greater predictability to both farmers and the government.

Here's what Dan Darling, president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, said: "Farmers have been assured that the 2012 year will be funded and administered as presented without a cap on funding."

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Thank you, Minister. I know that farmers across Ontario will appreciate having you set the record straight.

The letter also quotes several farm organizations on whether they correctly understood the budget and your discussions with them about the program.

Minister, our government worked extensively with farmers to implement the Risk Management Program, So it's important that farmers have a clear understanding of the intent of the government for RMP. Minister, can you

share with this House any of the reaction that you've heard from the agriculture stakeholders you've been working with on this program?

1120

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** Thanks again for that question. Mr. Speaker, Lorne Small, the president of the Christian farmers organization said, "The organization is satisfied with the government's message today that the made-in-Ontario Risk Management Program will be continued...."

The Grain Farmers of Ontario said this: "For the 2012 program year, our organization has been assured that the existing guidelines will remain in place and RMP will not be capped. The details of the 2013 program year will be part of an ongoing discussion...."

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that our farmers understand, and it's also clear that they don't want to be confused, knowingly or unknowingly. I think it would be fair to say that the last thing they want is to see this program put at risk with an early and unnecessary election.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last week, work in my Burlington and Toronto offices ground to a halt as a result of a malicious, cowardly smear campaign, one that the Premier and Minister of Health unleashed on the people of my riding. Angry, confused and shocked Burlingtonians were victims of Liberals' automated robo-calls, calls that falsely linked expansions of Joseph Brant hospital with the 2012 budget.

The Minister of Health took an oath to promote and protect the well-being of all Ontarians. That she would engage in such behaviour is truly disappointing. Speaker, will the Minister of Health confirm that she and the Premier put the fortunes of the Liberal Party above the health of the citizens of Burlington?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The member opposite, I believe, is aware that on page 40 of the budget, Speaker, it says, "The government will continue its investments in more than 30 new major hospital" capital "projects, in addition to the 25 major"—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I repeat my previous comment, and that is that I would rather us race to the top than race to the bottom. Please come to order.

Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker. So I quote from the budget, page 40: "The government will continue its investments in more than 30 new major hospital" capital "projects, in addition to the 25 major projects currently under construction." The Burlington hospital, Joe Brant hospital, is one of those 30 major capital expansions.

Speaker, I know it's difficult for the member opposite to have to have to choose between her loyalty to her party and her loyalty to her community, but I think this hospital expansion is important in the community.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Speaker, through you to the Minister of Health, my, my, you are rather liberal with the truth, aren't you? This budget does nothing—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would ask the member to withdraw that.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I withdraw.

This budget does nothing to repair the economy. It does nothing to correct your carefree spending. Hour by hour, you are increasing spending and deepening our debt. That is the real threat to projects like the Joseph Brant expansion.

Minister, you are a walking case of political opportunism and bad judgment. You were too busy campaigning to read the auditor's report on Ornge. You've endorsed dirty tricks and deceitful robocalls. And you have the nerve to sit there with a self-righteous smirk on your face.

Are you so out of touch with reality that you thought you could get away with not—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm disappointed that the member opposite is stooping to such personal attacks. But I do have to say that the member opposite, even in her question, illustrated the conflict that I'm hearing across the way. They're saying, "Spend more on hospitals," but they're saying, "You're spending too much." They can't have it both ways. They need to choose a lane.

The member opposite knows that if this budget does not pass, we will be forced into an unnecessary and expensive election. The member opposite also knows that this government remains firmly committed to the expansion at Joe Brant hospital. We are on track. We do not want to jeopardize that progress by an unnecessary and expensive election.

### JOB CREATION

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Families in northwestern Ontario are concerned about a Liberal budget that has let them down on jobs. There is no plan to create jobs in our communities and no commitment to invest in infrastructure that's needed in the Ring of Fire. Making things worse, cuts to tourism information centres will make it harder for already struggling tourism outfitters to grow their small businesses. Will we see the government move on our proposals to make the budget better for people, with real action on job creation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Speaker, I am very, very proud of this government and this government's budget. Their commitment to northern Ontario is voluminous,



when you think about the opportunity that this budget creates for northern Ontario.

Not only do we continue our investment in the northern Ontario heritage fund—that's to the tune of \$100 million—a fund that has created, to date, 18,000 jobs and co-op placements; a fund that has invested in 4,300 projects; that has leveraged more than \$2.4 billion to northern Ontario. This government has a commitment to northern Ontario that far surpasses the commitment of the two opposition parties when they were in government, when they stripped opportunity for northern Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** The truth is, the facts tell a different story. Given the choice, this government won't even hire Ontario workers. We've recently found out that people working for Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources aren't based in northwestern Ontario. They're not even based in southern Ontario. They're not even based in Canada. No, the MNR has taken call centre jobs that should be in Ontario and put them in Tennessee—this, on top of the McGuinty government's plan to further cut MNR jobs as announced in their budget.

If the Ontario government won't even employ people living in Ontario, how does it expect anyone else to employ Ontario residents? Will we see a proposal today from this government that takes action on jobs in northwestern Ontario?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I want to follow up on the northern Ontario heritage fund for a second, because the member's riding of Kenora-Rainy River has had approval of 384 projects. We've approved \$90,438,000, which has leveraged \$239,897,000 and has created 2,290 jobs in Kenora-Rainy River alone.

This budget protects the 170,000 jobs in northern Ontario and commits \$618 million to improving northern highways. Now, I say that's commitment. Are you going to support that tomorrow?

1130

### SKILLS TRAINING

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. We've been talking a lot about making sure that our students are ready for the 21st-century economy by making sure that they get affordable, high-quality post-secondary education, and we have done a great job on that, including our 30% tuition grant, which is making it more affordable. The proof is in the pudding because today, Ontario has among the highest rates of graduation when it comes to post-secondary education in the OECD countries.

We need to also talk about people who are already in the workforce and facing layoff. What are we going to do to help them? They've got a lot of skills, a lot of work experience and transferable skills. Can the minister tell us what we are doing to help these people transition?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** The member for Mississauga East-Cooksville is quite correct: We're going through a very challenging time. My friend the member from Essex

raised this same point earlier. When we went through a global recession, there was a fundamental change in our economy. We have lost some jobs, as everyone else in the western economy knows, and the jobs that have been created, which are now over 350,000—70% of those require a university or college education.

Our Second Career program has been aimed at trying to ensure that people who lost lower-skill jobs in the economy can get into the new higher-skill jobs within the economy. We have now put over 53,000 Ontarians who lost their jobs into high-skill jobs as a result of this program.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Minister. My supplementary is: It's important that we continue to train our workers who are leaving one industry to be matched immediately with employers in another industry. But what I'd like to know is: What are we doing to ensure that Ontarians are not only entering but completing Second Career programs and then landing good jobs?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you very much. In fact, 95% of the clients complete their skills-training program and about 75% are getting a job within six months, which is quite extraordinary.

The commitment of this government across the province has been quite extraordinary. The UOIT, which my friends opposite in the Durham region would know, has seen its budget increase under this government 386%. Part of the reason for that is that many of our colleges and universities have taken the spirit of this program and dramatically increased it.

If you want to work at GM or Chrysler, with about 9,000 jobs that have been created in that area alone, you now need a background in robotics or software development. Our colleges and universities, which have an over 86% placement—these jobs now in the new economy, whether they're apprenticeship, trades or college-based, require that higher education.

Families who have lost their jobs get \$28,000 per family throughout their training so that they don't end up in further poverty.

### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. Minister, three gasoline retailers in my area recently entered guilty pleas for price-fixing charges. I commend the federal Competition Bureau for sticking up for motorists feeling the pain at the pump, but my constituents think something is missing. They think Ontario's consumer services ministry is asleep at the switch.

People like Steve Connors of Kemptville are writing me to ask me a simple question. Other than watching the Premier drive up the price of gas with tax grabs, what is your ministry doing to protect consumers from being gouged?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** It is certainly a pleasure for me to rise in this Ontario Legislature to address issues

relating to consumer protection. This government is committed to protecting Ontario's consumers, and we certainly look to the people on the opposite side to stand up for Ontarians. They don't even want to stand up for the budget. They don't even care about Ontarians. They have no interest whatsoever in the budget, Mr. Speaker, so it behooves me that these people could get up and ask a question about consumer protection when they don't even care about Ontarians. They didn't even read the budget before they decided that they weren't going to support it. So, Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I appreciate it, Minister. This is a very touchy subject and difficult for you to answer. After all, it was your government who hit motorists with an 8% overnight increase thanks to the hated HST. No one knows consumer gouging like the McGuinty government.

Speaker, the Brockville Recorder and Times recently conducted a poll about gas prices, and 97% of respondents thought there was something fishy when it comes to how they fluctuate. So I ask you, Minister: Are you with the 97%, or is your head stuck in the sand with the 3% who think everything is okay?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me say that the member opposite should realize that an unnecessary election would kill the proposed legislation to crack down on cellphone issues and contract issues. I want to say, our government is committed to addressing issues relating to consumer protection, and we are indeed a strong ally of consumer—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Renfrew, come to order.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raises an issue that the federal government needs to address as well. We have made improvements in protection for consumers when they buy cars, make funeral arrangements, when they book their trips, and in various other aspects of consumer protection. We continue to work with our consumers in the province of Ontario to raise awareness, because we want smart consumers—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Your decisions to divest the Ontario Northland commission and shut down the rail line is going to put shippers along the route at risk. Companies like Lecours Lumber, Columbia Forest Products, Tembec in Hearst, Cochrane and other places, Agrium out of Opasatika, and Xstrata out of Timmins rely on the Ontario Northland as a cheap and efficient way of moving their goods. By shutting down the Ontario Northland, you're going to force them to go to road, which is going to cost a lot

more money. Why are you putting the jobs in these plants at risk yet again in northern Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Speaker, it's very, very important that everyone understands that the goal of this government is to ensure that we have a modern, effective, efficient transportation system in place, not only for today but for tomorrow. I think everyone in this House understands that we cannot sustain a \$100-million subsidy to the ONTC. So the government took the very, very difficult action it took when it decided that we will divest the ONTC. That doesn't mean that we are going to have an inferior system in place. We are very, very confident as we move forward that we are going to have a much more superior system of transportation in place. That's our goal; that's what we work towards.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The problem is, nobody has confidence in this government when it comes to anything you've done in northern Ontario. I think the reality of this government is that you have the Midas touch when it comes to anything you touch.

I have a very simple question for you. People in northern Ontario are hopping mad at what this government has not done when it comes to forestry and other industries. You're now about to shut down the Ontario Northland, and it's creating a situation in northern Ontario where people are actually talking about seceding from this province. Is this a legacy that you want to leave in northern Ontario when it comes to the record of your government—more northern alienation?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** Speaker, I'd like to read a letter. The letter is from Mike from North Bay, and he writes: "The NDP Was No Friend to Ontario Northland." He goes on to say, "When in power, the Ontario NDP reduced bus service from Timmins to Chapleau and Wawa, docked the new ferry in Tobermory, cut norOntair service from 21 to six communities and sold off Star Transfer, the trucking firm of the ONTC," putting those people out of work immediately.

Our plan for the ONTC is to divest the assets, not foreclose those assets, as the NDP did. We will divest to a system of transportation that will be in place, that will be sustainable, affordable, efficient and effective, not only for today but for tomorrow.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Introduction of guests? The member from Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, I stand on a point of order. Earlier today in question period, the member from Pickering-Scarborough East made a statement about an article in the National Post, to which I was attributed a comment. Speaker, I did not ever say that comment. It is untrue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Okay. While that could be made—it's not a point of order because, unfor-



tunately or fortunately, depending on one's perspective, only a member can correct their own record.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, can I rise again?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Yes, please do.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** How can I ask her to correct the record? As a new member, I would be interested to know that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I actually figured that one out. I wanted to check with the Clerk just to make sure.

The member can ask the member, and if the member chooses to speak to the member about that, you are absolutely free to do so.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** It gives me great pleasure, and I ask the entire House to welcome my guests. I have Gary Saran here, Gagan Kaur, Harjiwan Singh, Baldeep Singh, Harman Singh, Harbaljeet Singh and my brother Gurratan Singh. You can all stand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We always welcome our guests. Thank you for being here.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that they've arrived yet. We're expecting a grade 5 class from Innerkip public school to join us here in the Legislature today. I'd like to welcome them to the Legislature along with the teachers and the parents who are here supervising today and wish them all a good and happy day here, an educational day here at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. We do welcome the guests.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ONTARIO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Today, we have two great agricultural organizations with us here at Queen's Park: the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Dairy Farmers of Ontario.

Our farmers contribute greatly to our province's economy. In 2009, Ontario farm outputs contributed \$22 billion in gross economic stimulus. More than 80,000 Ontarians make this their living on farms, and 718,000 Ontarians work in the agri-food sector.

Our farmers work hard and they deserve our support, but there are a number of government policies that hurt our agriculture industry. Our farmers are struggling with too much red tape. Government needs to consult with farmers before they introduce legislation that impacts them. We need to find real solutions when the Endangered Species Act causes problems—such as the bobolink—not just postpone the problem; and to challenges like the OSPCA having huge powers on farms and over farm animal welfare without having the proper training and accountability.

We've heard from the OFA and other organizations that this government's decision to end the slots-at-race-tracks partnership will cost tens of thousands of jobs on farms and in our agri-businesses. This afternoon, Tim Hudak and I are looking forward to meeting with these organizations to discuss their challenges and priorities.

We were pleased to work with farmers for years to get a risk management program. Farmers, agricultural organizations and the PC caucus asked for an insurance program that farmers could depend on. We will continue to work with them during the review to make sure that farmers have a program that works.

I want to thank both organizations for coming to Queen's Park to update us today.

### TRISTAN EMIRY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I am honoured for the opportunity to recognize a young man from Algoma-Manitoulin, Tristan Emiry, who has won the prestigious Loran Award.

The Loran Award is the largest undergraduate merit scholarship in Canada. Tristan will receive up to \$80,000 to pursue his post-secondary studies when he graduates from Espanola High School this June. The Loran Award will include four years of funding and a comprehensive enrichment and mentoring program.

I am proud that one of my constituents is one of the 30 students from across Canada to receive this award. Tristan has been an active student as the Prime Minister of the student Parliament for the past two years, as well as Deputy Prime Minister in grade 10.

Tristan spearheaded the Spread the Net campaign in his high school with impressive results, leading to their school being featured on the Rick Mercer Report as the top fund-raising high school in Canada. This year, the school, with Tristan's leadership, tripled its donation, raising over \$31,000 for bed nets to help protect children from malaria in Africa. Once again on the Mercer Report a few weeks ago, Tristan was named the youth ambassador for Spread the Net.

Tristan plans to study either economics at McGill University or agriculture economics at Guelph. Whichever program he chooses, they will be fortunate to have him.

Tristan has earned the respect and admiration of many of his school and community members, and I want to pass along my congratulations and best wishes for him in his future.

### ONTARIO FARMERS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I rise today to recognize the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and the members who are participating in their visit to Queen's Park today.

The DFO works to ensure a consistent supply of milk is available to provide high-quality dairy products to consumers at reasonable prices while ensuring that producers receive a fair return. I think all members of this

House can truly be proud of the work that the Dairy Farmers of Ontario do so that Ontarians can enjoy delicious, locally produced dairy products.

I'd also like to recognize the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and their members who are visiting the Legislature today as well. The OFA is Ontario's largest general farm organization. We on this side of the House appreciated the contributions that the OFA made in developing the risk management and the self-directed risk management program. I'm certain all members of this House will take this opportunity to thank the OFA and their members for providing some of the good things that grow in Ontari-ari-ari-o.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm glad you didn't sing it.

### NATIONAL ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR AWARENESS WEEK

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise today to speak to a very important issue and an event of which we should all be aware. This week is National Organ Donor Week. One individual can save up to eight lives through organ donation and enhance the lives of 75 more through tissue donation.

Unfortunately, more than 4,000 Canadians are waiting for an organ transplant to save their lives and, in 2010, nearly 230 Canadians died while waiting for a transplant. For every million Canadians, 16.3 donate organs. Clearly, there is much more we can do.

It begins with awareness. The Torch of Life relay organized by the Step by Step Organ Transplant Association is currently crossing the province, encouraging Ontarians to become donors and save lives. In fact, today, and for the rest of the week, they are passing through the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Last year, along with the members for Newmarket–Aurora and Durham, I took on a challenge to raise the number of registered organ and tissue donors in my riding. The numbers in each of our ridings have since increased by 3%. I note there's now a new website that rates the towns, and the town of Parry Sound comes in at 48% as compared to a provincial average of 21%.

I encourage each of my colleagues here to take on a similar challenge, to visit [beadonor.ca](http://beadonor.ca) and educate themselves and others, register their consent to become an organ donor and help bring about the day where no Canadians die while waiting for a transplant.

### BRAD GIBB

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I rise today to acknowledge an achievement and a prestigious award that was won by a member of my community, a native of Amherstburg. Brad Gibb was named the program director of the year for a medium-sized market by the Canadian Music and Broadcasting Industry.

The list of winners at the recent Canadian Music and Broadcast Industry Awards includes Mr. Gibb, who's 35

years old, and won for the program director of the year for medium-sized markets and works at FM-96 in London. Gibb is the son of Sharon and Carl Gibb and got his start while growing up in Amherstburg.

The awards ceremony was held March 22 at the Fairmont Royal York in Toronto and resulted in the biggest award that Gibb has won in his career to date. He said it was a reflection of the people whom he works with and it's a special award as he was recognized for doing something that he loves to do.

A number of factors are considered in this award, including ratings and the commitment to developing Canadian talent, including on-air talent as well as Canadian musicians. Having a good relationship with members of the Canadian music industry is also a component.

Mr. Gibb spent 14 years working in the radio industry but traces his roots back to the days of General Amherst High School, where he and Alex Storino would do morning announcements, similar to morning show radio hosts.

Jack Sorenson, a teacher at General Amherst, took them to the Windsor Press Club one day, where they met people employed in the radio industry, and things took off from there.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate them on this achievement and wish Mr. Gibb much success in his career going forward.

1310

### PROSTATE CANCER

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Viewers might be aware that all members today are wearing the same tie or the same scarf, and that is because today is Prostate Cancer Awareness Day. During their lifetime, one in seven Canadian men will develop prostate cancer, and virtually all of us here in this House know someone who has had to confront this disease.

In recent years, though, we've made progress. After seeing a rise in the 1980s and 1990s, the rate of prostate cancer mortality fell in Ontario, and by 2009, it reached its lowest level in 25 years. It just proves that investments in our health care system do make a difference.

Our government has shown leadership on this issue. In 2008, we expanded OHIP to provide publicly insured PSA tests for eligible patients at a community lab. To date, the total volume of PSA tests for 2011-12 is over 400,000. Yet it's still a massive challenge. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, prostate cancer remains the most frequently diagnosed cancer in our entire province. Sadly, Speaker, last year an estimated 1,550 men died of this disease.

Even now, few men and their families know about the risks of developing prostate cancer. That's one of the reasons for today, Speaker, Prostate Cancer Awareness Day: to educate about the risks and remember those who have had to fight prostate cancer, and to remind us all that there's a lot more work to be done.



## BUTTER TART TRAIL

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Any visit to Wellington county wouldn't be complete without a tasty treat: the great Canadian butter tart. The township of Wellington North created a tourism sensation when, five years ago, it created the Butter Tart Trail. Publications including the Toronto Star and Canadian Living magazine have featured the Butter Tart Trail.

Winding through Wellington North, the trail includes stops at various antique shops, farm markets, artisan studios and, of course, bakeries that serve butter tarts. Some favourites include the butter tart served with a scoop of ice cream and the official goat butter tart, made with real goat milk butter. It's not just delicious, but it's also a community-based economic development that has proven to be very effective.

The Butter Tart Trail comes from the idea that to promote local economic development, you need to build on existing community strength and capitalize on your assets. That's what happened in Wellington North, and we've seen that community leadership goes a long way.

I want to commend the council and staff of Wellington North, the tourism committee and all our local businesses that take part in the Butter Tart Trail. Their success is a clear sign that the spirit of enterprise is alive and well in Perth-Wellington. For that and for contributing so much to our communities, they should be congratulated.

I want to encourage all MPPs to pick up a copy of the map of the trail—I have it in my Queen's Park office—and I hope you'll join me as we "simply explore" the Butter Tart Trail.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I want to thank the member for making me drool. I appreciate that very much.

The member for Etobicoke North.

## IMMIGRATION POLICY

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Speaker, I'd like to inform you, and through you the people of Ontario and members of this chamber, of a social engineering and ethnic selection experiment that I believe is currently being exacted—possibly perpetrated—against the people of Ontario, as well as Canadians in general, by the federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

As you'll be aware, Speaker, hundreds of thousands of immigrants who in good faith have applied for the past eight years, up till 2008, have simply been told that their applications have been dismissed. They are to reapply under a new social engineering experiment. Their applications have been discarded, cleansed and thrown out. As an example, that leads to the doubling and tripling of time for family unification, spousal reunification.

Who will they accept? Well, Speaker, I would like to put on notice that my Canada includes the world, and as an example, the federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration is reducing the number of centres that are offering services in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil

and Arabic. They're even reducing the number of centres that offer services in French.

As was said today in the Toronto Star, one immigrant who applied says that we've lost "our youth, our life and our dreams."

This is an Americanization, an Albertanization, a Wildrose-ing of Canada, and I sincerely hope, Speaker, that this far-right Republican Tea Party mentality does not become Canada's mentality.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I rise today to share with the House the concerns of the Huron Manufacturing Association. They wrote to me about their concern about the loss of manufacturing jobs in our riding. They're concerned that manufacturing will not survive this Liberal government's unaffordable and unsustainable energy policies. Speaker, in their note to me they said, "We have to fight the McGuinty government because they are going to kill manufacturing as we know it in the county today." They also refer to an article from the magazine Canadian Manufacturing that says that, according to the Fraser Institute, "Renewable energy could cost Ontario electricity users an extra \$18 billion over 20 years."

Speaker, the Fraser Institute estimates that Ontario consumers will pay \$285 million more annually for residential electricity and Canada could lose an additional 41,000 full-time-equivalent jobs over a 20-year period because of the McGuinty government's subsidization of renewable energy.

The Fraser Institute said, "If other governments choose to emulate Ontario's energy policies, they too will see higher electricity prices for homeowners and businesses, a need to build costly new electric transmission infrastructure, and the likelihood of job losses in the manufacturing sector as companies relocate in search of" lower electricity costs.

I too am concerned. So I urge the McGuinty Liberals to stand up and show some concern for our people, our jobs and our industry.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Given this morning and now: In the old days—very old days, by the way—there was full-time kindergarten, but they had to take a nap at noon hour. I just thought I'd let you know that.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order from the member from Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, earlier today, during the introduction of visitors, I mentioned that the Innerkip Central public school grade 5 class would be with us. They weren't here at the time, but they are here now, so I'd like the Legislature to recognize them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's not a point of order, but we are welcoming them, and I can ask you if you had your nap at noon hour today too. So we'll have to carry on with this.

## RAY HAGGERTY

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allowed to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Ray Haggerty.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, this is the time we always hope doesn't come about, and that is that someone is going to pass away, but it's inevitable for all of us.

I knew Ray Haggerty extremely well because he was in a riding very close to mine, and he was one of my mentors.

He was first elected in 1967. You have to remember that from 1967 to 1975, there were no constituency offices, so your house was the constituency office. There were no buffers—no staff there to answer the phones or to help with the writing out of answers and so on. You were it—you and your spouse, usually. Marie was a gem because she worked with Ray and members of the family on issues of great importance to the people of—well, the riding had many names: Welland South, Niagara South, Erie. It had a number of names over the years.

Ray was a consummate constituency person. I know we always say that when we're paying tribute to people, because we're all constituency people, but Ray was it, I'm going to tell you. This guy, back in the days—and I knew other members who did that—he went to a WSIB hearing with the constituent, or one of the other panels that a constituent would appear before, and helped with the actual preparation of the case and so on. So Ray was very, very hands-on.

He always felt that it was important to go to the fire halls. He said that that's where you really learn what's going on, because, of course, being in a kind of a rural riding, for the most part—there were some towns and cities. But in rural ridings, the volunteer firefighters would certainly provide for you, as well as the professional firefighters, what was going on in the community. So Ray was very good at that.

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He helped out youth groups. He worked extremely well with the schools. I was talking to my brother, Ted Bradley, a little while ago, who knew Ray very well and lived in Port Colborne and was a school principal in Sherkston at one time. He said that Ray was just marvellous to work with the schools. Anything the schools wanted, anything the kids wanted, Ray was there to help out. My brother was also a commanding officer of sea cadets in Port Colborne, and again, he said that Ray and his brothers would really help out with anything that would happen in terms of fundraising for organizations such as theirs.

He was not a man of few words. At one time in the House, there were no limits on speeches. We would threaten—our party—if the government were becoming

too difficult, to have Ray give a four-hour speech if perhaps they wouldn't see their way to moving some issue along the way we would like to move it along. Ray was great. He could actually speak for four hours on everything and everybody in his constituency. So he was the kind of person who really knew everybody in the constituency.

He also used to love driving his tractor. I think he was the president of the plowman's association in his part of the province as well.

I went to the funeral. I went to the visitation as well. What you saw there were people of all different political affiliations and no political affiliation. Every one of them had a Ray Haggerty story of what Ray had done for them individually or for the constituency in one way or another.

He always had a smile on his face, always a greeting, a little quip, a little joke from time to time to lighten things up. I know that people missed him when he decided to retire in 1990. He had had various positions: parliamentary assistant to a number of ministers, for instance; critic, when he was in opposition. But he will always be remembered as the Niagara person, particularly the Niagara South person, and as a friend of so many within the community.

He came from a different era of MPP. There was no television in the House until 1975, so I guess you could send back the Hansards, and people, if they didn't have anything else to do, would read those Hansards. But you would find a significant contribution from Ray Haggerty.

I would like to say this about Ray: that he could be called Landslide Ray. He was elected in 1967 by 107 votes, in 1971 by 438 votes. He built it up as he went along, of course, and picked up the kind of support he needed.

To his wife, Marie, we offer our thanks for sharing Ray with us, because he was a great guy. Laurie, his daughter; Dennis and Tim, his sons; Craig Miner, who was his son-in-law; his brothers, Jim and Dick Haggerty, who worked with Ray so often; the grandchildren, Tim, Shane, Andrew and Michael—to all of them, we offer our thanks.

The constituency he represented and the people of the province of Ontario were better because of the kind of service that Ray Haggerty provided to his constituents and to our province.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I humbly stand in the Legislature today to rise on behalf of my colleagues in the PC caucus to offer tribute to former Niagara South MPP Ray Haggerty. But before I begin, I'd like to recognize the members of Mr. Haggerty's family—his wife, Marie, and his daughter, Laurie—and give my respects to the rest of Mr. Haggerty's family who are watching from home today.

Whenever we take the time to remember a colleague who has left us, I think it's important for us to keep in mind the friends and the family who so proudly carry on that person's legacy. Certainly any mark that any one of us here in the Legislative Assembly manages to leave on



their communities is due, in no small part, to the love, support and patience of our loved ones, the people who helped us door-knock, shuffled papers at the office and waited up when we were late at the office serving our constituents.

From what I've learned about Ray, I can imagine that he spent more than a few late nights at Queen's Park. From nearly every single account of the man, even in the opinions of his opponents, he was a guy whose popularity in the Niagara region was never, ever in doubt.

He worked hard, and his constituents rewarded that hard work by sending him back to the Legislature in six consecutive elections. That's a run of 23 years. An entire generation of Niagara South residents grew up, attended grade school, then high school, went on to jobs and university, all under the watchful gaze of Mr. Haggerty. That's a longer political career than Franklin Roosevelt, longer than Pierre Trudeau, and nearly as long as Pope John Paul II. In the current Canadian political climate, that's no small achievement.

But Ray's success shocked exactly no one. Forgive me for quoting from a Progressive Conservative in honouring a Liberal MPP, but I think the following passage is important: "Ray's so well-liked in this riding that it could really work against us if we tried to go around saying he hasn't done a good job. His representation has been solid." That's from the St. Catharines Standard, on the eve of the May 1985 election. Even his opponents knew what they were up against: A veteran MPP that had already spent many political lifetimes ensuring that his constituents were having their voices heard in the Legislature.

Two years later, Ray would win again with the most impressive result ever—over 11,000 votes, more than double those of the opposing candidates. This was in a brand new riding, not the familiar old Erie riding that he knew so well.

By all accounts, Ray stuck closely to his small-town roots outside of Queen's Park duties. A machinist by trade and a staunch union man, Ray fashioned his own hand railings around the House and served as a volunteer firefighter in Port Colborne. When he retired in 1990, his intent was to keep up with his hobby of restoring antique trucks.

He was something of a rebel within his own party, much like the modern-day Liberal member from Niagara Falls, Mr. Craitor. It must be something in the water.

Ray almost sounded downright Conservative at times. He once was quoted as saying he disagreed with most of the parties of the day, even his own, in how to go about creating jobs in Ontario. He didn't believe government could "go around just giving out handouts to industries."

In 1980, he addressed the Legislature on the subject of national unity. It was a contentious time, as many of us will remember. The Prime Minister was attempting to bring the Constitution home, and not everyone was pleased about it. The "long knives" were out, as René Lévesque said. Yet Ray stood in the House to declare his support for a unified Canada, and even went so far as to

call for an elected Senate, a topic that still resonates today.

I say this not to claim Ray as a closeted Ontario PC member, though I am certain there were many on the opposite benches that would have liked to have counted him among their number. I say this because he was truly an MPP who not only took pride in his Liberal roots, but managed to harmonize those beliefs with his own gut feelings. I can tell you, being from a small-town riding myself, people notice that. You can't fake sincerity of self; if you tried, the folks in a small town, whether it's Port Colborne or my home town of Chatham, will notice.

Ray knew, in his final election, that he would soon be hanging up his boots. He went out on top, leaving room for the next generation of eager MPPs. One of those who would follow was our own PC leader, Tim Hudak. I know Ray took time to offer advice to Tim, who was a rookie MPP from the Niagara region in 1995. I know that, being a rookie MPP myself, I would gladly have accepted Ray's advice if I'd had the chance to meet him. It's clear from his track record that this was a man who knew how to serve his constituents, how to listen and how to sympathize.

One thing I do share with Ray, however, is the pride of serving as a labour critic in the opposition. It's not a glamorous role, but it is an important one, one that requires the ability to connect with the workers that have built this province. As a builder himself, Ray clearly would have had that touch. I hope I can approximate that.

I'd like to thank my fellow members for giving me the opportunity to speak to the legacy of our colleague Ray. And of course, thank you to his family for sharing him with us and the people of Ontario. You know, regardless of party or politics, every one of us hopes to live up to the very high standard that he set in the Ontario Legislature.

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**Ms. Cindy Forster:** On behalf of the NDP caucus, I'm happy to get up here and speak about Ray Haggerty today. In fact, two municipalities in the former Erie riding are actually part of my riding today as we're here.

I met Ray only once or twice in my life, when I was kind of lobbying with labour here at Queen's Park. I found him to be gracious and humorous. He was a good listener, and he was a fighter for health and safety issues for workers in this province.

He passed away in April last year, but in life he represented for more than 30 years constituents in his riding, parts of my riding and probably parts of other people's ridings. He was a councillor for Bertie township. He was also on Welland council as a councillor. For all those years, he represented vigorously and with determination. He didn't just talk about the issues.

His family, as we've heard, is watching on television today: his wife, Marie; his two sons, Tim and Dennis; his daughter, Laurie, and her husband; and the grandchildren. When I was having a look at this stuff, I noted that he often talked about his missus, Marie. The St. Catharines Standard quoted him in 1985 as saying, "We should get Mrs. Haggerty in there to manage On-

tario's money the way she runs mine, then we wouldn't have all these deficit problems."

Over the weekend, I had the opportunity to speak to Marie and Tim—Tim I've known for many years—because I wanted you to know about Ray the man, and I didn't know a lot about him myself. He grew up in Port Colborne. He moved to Sherston, a rural part of the Erie riding along the lake, and he bought a home with 25 acres of property. He called himself a farmer, but his son says he was a gentleman farmer. He planted tomatoes, which he sold to a local cannery. He planted corn, which he sold to the Americans that populated the lake in the summer. He raised chickens for brooders as well.

He was a steelworker, a machinist by trade, a union man who held positions of union steward and shop steward in workplaces he had before politics became his job. He was a member of the Odd Fellows, a volunteer firefighter for Port Colborne in the early days, chair of the Niagara South Plowing Match and Niagara Antique Power. Over those years, he acquired seven antique tractors, which still sit on his farm property in Sherston, one for each of his grandchildren, although they don't know what they'll do with them.

The family says that Marie was his right-hand woman and that she was the glue that held the family together while he was at Queen's Park doing what he did so well. She said it was difficult raising three kids and farming 25 acres, but his brothers and their families helped out a lot. She said that life as the wife and family of a politician can be lonely, but they picked up the threads on the weekend, in her words, and Ray never brought his Queen's Park disagreements home.

She said he could fix anything because he was a machinist, a millwright; however, trying to get him to do it was another thing. She often had to threaten to call someone, and it would cost money, and then he would get down to business. She said it was an interesting life, with many friends from all political stripes. They attended many events. The best thing was that she didn't have to cook on the weekends.

His son told me he was a God-fearing man, never drank or smoked, and was set in his ways. He loved golf, and often his golf cronies would pick him up in Niagara Falls at the train station, and they'd go off for a golf game before he even headed home on a Thursday night or at the end of his week.

Both of his sons got the political bug: his son Tim, three rounds of council for Fort Erie; and his son Dennis, four elected terms in Port Elgin. His daughter, Laurie, was very active in all of his campaigns.

Tim laughed, though, when he told me a story about a speech at an event a few years ago. He was talking about when kids leave home. Generally, it's the kids who leave home. They go to school, they get married or they go out and find a job. He said, "In my family, it was Dad who left home in 1967, and he never returned again until politics was over." He said he got quite a chuckle about that.

During his years at Queen's Park, he pushed hard on a lot of issues. He was, I guess, in part responsible for the

Good Samaritan Act, WSIB reform, health and safety reform; and public access to our beaches here in Ontario, which was a big issue for him.

He was a politician who worked with all political parties to get something achieved in the House. He was well respected, well loved by his family and his constituents, and our caucus sends our condolences to the family, to his friends. Thank you for sharing him with us and the province for all those years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I want to thank all the members for their kind and generous words to bring praise and honour to a former member, and also your kind words to the family. I will make steps to ensure that those kind words are relayed to the family members on all of our behalf. I thank you for that.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### NEW DRIVERS' INSURANCE RATE REDUCTION ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE POUR LES NOUVEAUX CONDUCTEURS

Mr. Sergio moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to amend the Insurance Act to provide for lower insurance rates for new drivers / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances afin de prévoir des taux d'assurance-automobile moins élevés pour les nouveaux conducteurs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much, Speaker. The bill requires a risk classification system used by an insurer to determine rates for automobile insurance to provide for lower rates for new drivers by crediting new drivers with additional years of driving experience. A new driver is disqualified from receiving additional years of credit in a number of circumstances, including if the driver has been convicted of certain driving offences or has had his or her driver's licence suspended for non-payment of a certain fine.

In a nutshell, Speaker, the bill speaks of giving our young people, first-time drivers, a chance to be proven innocent until proven guilty. So far, our young people have had a rough ride when they first get a driver's licence. To try and get insurance has been very difficult and very expensive, and I hope that, with the consent of the House, we can finally do something for our young people in Ontario.

## NOTICES OF POINTS OF PRIVILEGE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I have received three notices of intent to raise points of privilege. One



was received this morning, and I am prepared to hear that motion. The other two were received just this afternoon, one just since I've been sitting at the Chair, and as they are quite lengthy, I'm not prepared to hear those immediately. Since they are both dealing with matters that occurred starting several days ago, I trust it will not be too much of a problem to deal with them tomorrow.

In addition, we have of late engaged in a practice that I agree with of sharing the notices with the other parties. There is no indication at this time that that has been done, and I would ask Ms. McKenna or Mr. Leone that if this has not occurred, to share that. If it has, I apologize for not knowing ahead of time.

#### MEMBER'S COMMENTS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm recognizing the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka for his point of privilege.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of privilege for which I gave verbal notice on Thursday, April 19, and written notice today, April 23, to both you and the House leaders.

The question of privilege relates to comments by the Deputy Premier, the member from Windsor-Tecumseh, in response to a question from the member from Newmarket-Aurora during question period on Thursday, April 19, 2012, related to my role as Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. The Hansard will show that in his response the member from Windsor-Tecumseh implies a lack of impartiality on my part in fulfilling my duties as Chair.

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As you also know, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts is currently undertaking hearings on the Auditor General's special report on Ornge, and it is my legislative duty to preside over those hearings.

This comes on the heels of another incident questioning my impartiality by Mr. Grahame Rivers, the Premier's former social media coordinator. Mr. Rivers used Twitter to impugn my character and infer that I could not impartially perform my duties as Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. The message unjustly damages my good name and reputation in what I believe is an effort to intimidate me and interfere with my legislative duties as Chair of the public accounts committee.

Again, there can be no mistaking the message inferred by Mr. Rivers's tweet. You may recall that it was the subject of a question put by the member for Nickel Belt, Ms. Gélinas, during question period on April 3, 2012.

I should note that the tweet has since been re-tweeted by Warren Kinsella, Bryan Leblanc, the Nickel Belt Liberal riding association and, I'm sure, others.

With respect to the point of privilege I'm asserting, I am supported by parliamentary authorities. House of Commons Procedures and Practice, second edition, 2009, section 13, "Rules of Order and Decorum," "Reflections on the Chair," states: "Reflections must not be cast in debate on the conduct of the Speaker or other presiding

officers. It is unacceptable to question the integrity and impartiality of a presiding officer and if such comments are made, the Speaker will interrupt the member and may request that the remarks be withdrawn."

In addition, page 500 of the Parliament of Australia's House of Representatives Practice, fifth edition, under "References to and Reflections on Members," states: "Offensive words may not be used against any member and all imputations of improper motives to a member and all personal reflections on other members are considered to be highly disorderly."

Furthermore, reference is made to the accepted procedure for making such an imputation: "The practice of the House, based on that of the House of Commons, is that members can only direct a charge against other members or reflect upon their character or conduct upon a substantive motion which admits of a distinct vote of the House."

The authority for this principle is derived from Erskine May's Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament, 23rd edition, page 387, which states: "No charge of a personal character in respect of these categories of person can be raised except on a direct and substantive motion. No statement of that kind can be incorporated in a broader motion, nor, for example, included in a reply to a question."

Mr. Speaker, I draw to your attention a similar case and the December 17, 2009, ruling of Speaker Boudreau of New Brunswick. I'll read directly from the statement by Speaker Boudreau:

"While I am on my feet, I will give my decision on the question of privilege raised by the honourable Minister of Tourism and Parks, on Tuesday of this week, concerning statements made by members of this assembly outside the House which cast doubt on the impartiality of an officer of the assembly, namely the Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Miramichi-Bay du Vin.

"I want to thank both the Minister of Tourism and Parks and the member for Rothesay for their comments.

"I have considered the remarks in question and the allegations of bias made against the Deputy Speaker by the Leader of the Opposition and by the member for Saint John Portland and published in The Daily Gleaner, the Telegraph-Journal, and the Times and Transcript of December 12, 2009, and in the Miramichi Leader of December 14, 2009.

"I have reviewed the parliamentary authorities, and there is no question regarding the seriousness of reflections and allegations of this nature on chair occupants. Reflections on the character or actions of the Speaker or other presiding officers have been ruled to be breaches of privilege.

"Remarks critical of the Speakership, be they uttered inside the House or outside the chamber, particularly when uttered by a member of the House, are very serious and in themselves have been ruled to be breaches of privilege as noted in citation 168(1) of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, sixth edition at page 49:

“Reflections upon the character or actions of the Speaker may be punished as breaches of privilege. The actions of the Speaker cannot be criticized incidentally in debate or upon any form of proceeding except by way of a substantive motion.”

“Allegations of bias are in themselves a form of intimidation or attempted intimidation. I would like to quote from Marleau and Montpetit’s House of Commons Procedure and Practice, second edition, 2009, where it is stated at page 116:

“The intimidation or attempted intimidation of the Speaker or any other chair occupant is viewed very seriously by the House. On three occasions, the House has viewed criticisms of the impartiality of the Chair as attempts at intimidation and, therefore, as privilege matters. On December 22, 1976, the House adopted a motion finding that a statement made in a newspaper article about Speaker Jerome was “a gross libel on Mr. Speaker and that the publication of the article was a gross breach of privileges of the House.” On March 23, 1993, Speaker Fraser ruled that a member’s comments about the impartiality of a chair occupant constituted a *prima facie* case of privilege, noting that an attack against the integrity of an officer of the House was also an attack against the House.”

“Colleagues, as the Speaker, it is my duty to protect this institution and the officers who serve and represent it. They must be protected against reflections on their actions.

“Only by means of a substantive motion, for which the required two days’ notice has been given, may the actions of the Chair be challenged, criticized or debated.

“I therefore find that there is a *prima facie* case of a breach of privilege.”

I believe that Speaker Boudreau’s decision speaks to both the comments raised by the member from Windsor–Tecumseh and the issue of the tweet by Mr. Rivers.

I am further supported by parliamentary authorities and House of Commons Procedure and Practice, where O’Brien and Bosc stated that “Speakers have consistently upheld the right of the House to the services of its members free from intimidation.”

Speaker Lamoureux stated in a 1973 ruling that “no hesitation in reaffirming the principle that parliamentary privilege includes the right of a member to discharge his responsibilities as a member of the House free from threats or attempts at intimidation.”

O’Brien and Bosc conclude that:

“It is impossible to codify all incidents which might be interpreted as matters of obstruction, interference, molestation or intimidation and as such constitute *prima facie* cases of privilege. However, some matters found to be *prima facie* include the damaging of a member’s reputation ... the intimidation of members and their staff and of witnesses before committees, and the provision of misleading information.”

Citation 93 of Beauchesne’s Parliamentary Rules and Forms, sixth edition, states, “It is generally that any

threat or attempt to influence the vote of, or actions of a member, is breach of privilege.”

In Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, Maingot provides for the novel aspect of cases dealing with the publication on the Internet, including through Twitter. At page 225, Maingot notes, “While privilege may be codified, contempt may not, because new forms of obstruction are constantly being devised and Parliament must be able to invoke its penal jurisdiction to protect itself against these new forms....”

Maingot also offers an articulate review of the balance to consider between free and democratic expression—or even critical speech—and a breach of privilege or contempt. At page 235 he states:

“All interferences with members’ privileges of freedom of speech, such as editorials and other public comment, are not breaches of privilege even though they influence the conduct of members in their parliamentary work... But any attempt by improper means to influence or obstruct a member in his parliamentary work may constitute contempt. What constitutes an improper means of interfering with members’ parliamentary work is always a question depending on the facts of each case.”

I am also supported by parliamentary precedent. Speaker Parent, on March 24, 1994, stated, “Threats of blackmail or intimidation of a member of Parliament should never be taken lightly. When such occurs, the very essence of free speech is undermined. Without the guarantee of freedom of speech, no member of Parliament can do his duty as expected.”

This brings me back to the comment by the Deputy Premier, the member for Windsor–Tecumseh. The comments by the member from Windsor–Tecumseh in this House damage the reputation for fairness and integrity that I have earned over the past decade since I was elected as the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka in 2001. It implies I acted improperly by meeting with a public agency, despite no evidence being offered by the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. I believe it is an attempt to intimidate me.

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If the member from Windsor–Tecumseh has evidence instead of innuendo, let him produce it. If the Premier’s office or government caucus believes I should recuse myself, let them have the courage to say so and bring a substantive motion.

Rather than act honourably, they impugn my integrity and reputation and, in doing so, unduly interfere with my work as Chair.

Upon your ruling that a *prima facie* breach of privilege exists, I’m prepared to move that the matter be referred to an appropriate committee of the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Please be seated.

On the same order, the member from Trinity—the member from Timmins–James Bay. I start with the letter and I lose it. The member from Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It’s no problem. I get names wrong, Ralph.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you, Speaker, for bringing me to order. Everybody laughs in my caucus because they know, in fact, I'm really bad at names.

I just want to put a couple of things on the record from our perspective here in the NDP caucus, and that is that I think that the point the member raises is a valid one. I'm just going to go through the reasons why I think it's important that you give this serious consideration, which I know you will, but I want to add to it.

If you look at what was said—and I'm just going to quote from the Hansard—Mr. Duncan, on that particular date, said, "That motion that I referred to to call Mr. Mitchell to committee was in fact a government motion, and the Conservative Chair of the committee deferred dealing with it until next week." I think he's sort of trying to imply that somehow or other that's being partisan.

We all know in this House that the Chair of a committee has a very important role. We form the committees by way of motion in the House. The committees then, by way of election amongst their own, elect a Chair, and that Chair is there to do a number of things.

I want to go to, in the orders and precedents, House of Commons Procedure and Practice, and draw your attention to pages 1030 and 1031. I'm not going to read it all because it's too long. I just want to come to the important part. It says, under "Procedural Responsibilities":

"Chairs preside over committee meetings and oversee committee work. They recognize the members, witnesses and other people who wish to speak at these meetings; as in the House, all remarks are addressed to the Chair. They ensure that any rules established by the committee, including those on the apportioning of speaking time, are respected. They are responsible for maintaining order and decorum in committee proceedings, and rule on any procedural matter that arises, subject to an appeal to the committee."

It says, under "Administrative responsibilities"—and this is the point: "Committee Chairs have considerable administrative responsibilities, starting with those involving the committee's program of activities. In compliance with instructions from the committee or an order from the House" itself—and it says, second point:

"—decides on the agendas for the meeting;"

What was at subject here is when the committee was going to deal with an actual item, it's clearly within the purview of the Chair, in consultation with the committee, obviously, to decide what the agenda is going to be.

"—cancels scheduled meetings or modifies agendas if an unexpected development makes this necessary"—and if there are no committee meetings before the meeting, they need to be cancelled or whatever. Clearly, there is a responsibility on the Chair to ensure that things are dealt with that are following the standing orders, that follow the precedents and also allow the committee to deal with things in an orderly fashion.

I think that's what the member was trying to do, and I think for the minister to somehow say that he was being partisan was a bit beyond the pale.

I end on this note: The minister does say, "I don't want to offend the sensibilities of the Chair or the House. I won't use some language, but it appears as though they won't want him at committee."

That is a pretty serious statement. All of us here are partisan to a degree: I am; you are; everyone is. But once we get into the position of Chair, as you as our Speaker, we take on a different responsibility. I think for the integrity of this House and to ensure that there is no grey when it comes to that particular understanding that all members here are honourable, and when they take the position of Chair of a committee or they chair this House, as you are, Mr. Speaker—that we give them our confidence and understand that, at times, I may not agree with you, Speaker, on what you've done as far as a ruling or whatever, but you are the Chair and as long as you follow the rules of the House, I have to live with that and I have to accept it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Government House leader on the same order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've had an opportunity to—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me. I listen carefully to everyone, and I've got to hear them, please.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had a chance to read the hand-delivered letter that was sent to yourself and to all the House leaders a number of hours ago from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. I had some comments on the case that he has outlined in his letter and also in the Legislature today.

I want to begin, however, by stating very clearly and unequivocally my respect, and the respect of members on this side of the House, for the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. He is a long-standing parliamentarian. He is someone with an outstanding reputation, and there was no attempt to tarnish that reputation through any of the matters that were put forward.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, I've had a chance to look through the arguments. The question that is being put forward today is one of whether the member's privileges were, obviously, breached by the exchange within question period. Having had, as I say, a chance to examine and to look at the source material, I think that if anything, the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka may want to claim that the comments that were made raise a question of order but certainly not one of privilege. I'd like to just go through a number of authorities which I think say that the point of privilege that is being raised is not valid, according to parliamentary rules and customs.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka relies, for example, on O'Brien and Bosc, page 614: "Reflections must not be cast in debate on the conduct of the Speaker or other presiding officers. It is unacceptable to question the integrity and impartiality of a presiding officer and if such comments are made, the Speaker will interrupt the member and may request that the remarks be withdrawn."

The Speaker will be aware that the Chair of a standing committee is not a presiding officer of this House, and

therefore the passage that has been cited has no application to the current circumstances. Sections 3 to 5 of the standing orders state that the presiding officers of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario include the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House, and the Deputy Speakers. The member from Parry Sound-Muskoka is not a presiding officer when he serves in his capacity as Chair of the public accounts committee.

The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka further cites page 500 of the House of Representatives Practice from the Parliament of Australia. The Speaker will note that this passage does not speak to matters of privilege but rather matters of order. It therefore has no relevance to the claims asserted in the point of privilege that has been put forward by the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Finally, the member cites page 387 of Erskine May's second edition to assert that a member may make no "charge of a personal character" except by means of a direct and substantive motion. While this passage may speak to the proper proceedings for making such a charge, it neither demonstrates that the Deputy Premier made such a charge, nor, if he did, that it constituted a breach of privilege.

In sum, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka has failed to cite any relevant authority to suggest that the comments of the Deputy Premier constitute a *prima facie* case of privilege. I suggest this because the Deputy Premier's comments do not fall under any of the recognized categories of privilege as set out in the various authorities commonly referenced in this House.

I conclude, though, Mr. Speaker, where I began, which is that we're having a debate about the technical rules and conventions of Parliament in terms of what is a point of privilege versus, perhaps in this case, a point of order. But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate on behalf of the government and on behalf of myself our continuing respect for the member, and the fact that he enjoys an unimpeachable reputation as a member of the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I want to thank the members for their participation in this very important issue, and I will endeavour to delve into this and report back to the House sharply. Thank you so much.

## PETITIONS

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, and it reads as follows—the member from Norfolk would have got in:

1400

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have been bought out of their homes" to silence them;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put" in place "a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning," and not on McGuinty policies.

I'm pleased to sign and support this, and present it to William, one of the pages here.

## ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'm pleased to submit this petition with another 1,000 signatures.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately."

I hereby sign the petition and give it to page Katarina.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My petition is in regard to escaping domestic violence.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas all Ontarians have the right to a safe home environment;

"Whereas the government of Ontario works to reduce all barriers in place that prevent victims of domestic violence from fleeing abusive situations;

"Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act does not take into consideration the special circumstances facing a tenant who is suffering from abuse;



"Whereas those that live in fear for their personal safety and that of their children should not be financially penalized for the early termination of their residential leases;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Bill 22, the Escaping Domestic Violence Act ... be adopted so that victims of domestic violence be afforded a mechanism for the early termination of their lease to allow them to leave an abusive relationship and find a safe place for themselves and their children to call home."

Speaker, I agree with this petition and affix my signature, and send it to the table via page Georgina.

## INDUSTRIE DES COURSES DE CHEVAUX

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**M<sup>me</sup> Lisa MacLeod:** À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, par l'entremise de l'honorable Madeleine Meilleur et l'honorable Bob Chiarelli :

"Attendu que l'industrie ontarienne des courses et d'élevage de chevaux génère à elle seule plus de 2 milliards de dollars en activité économique; et

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.3 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion a year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"Compte tenu de ce qui précède, nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

"Call on the Ontario government to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

Speaker, last evening my colleagues from Leeds-Grenville and from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry accepted 25,000 signatures—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Petitions? The member for Nickel Belt.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I had the pleasure to meet a great number of young families in my riding who gave me this petition, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario," including in Nickel Belt; and

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry," including 600 of them in Nickel Belt;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the" Ontario "government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs," including 600 of them in Nickel Belt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I'm supportive of this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Andrew to bring it to the Clerk.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition from my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which states:

"Whereas a progressive Ontario budget calls for bold and decisive deficit reduction action to ensure that Ontario remains the most attractive and competitive place in North America to set up or relocate a business, raise a family or build a career; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has introduced a budget that sets out a five-year deficit reduction, leading to a balanced budget by fiscal year 2017-18, while preserving Ontario's progress in infrastructure, health care and education; and

"Whereas the 2012-13 Ontario budget proposes \$4 of expense reduction for every dollar raised in new revenues, with such expense reduction including implementation of key recommendations in the Drummond report, eliminating overlap and duplication, and compensation restraint in the Ontario broader public sector;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the elected members of all parties support the comprehensive set of financial measures and expense reductions proposed in the 2012-13 Ontario budget to enable Ontario to balance its budget on schedule; enhance its world-leading position; and attract, build and retain the people, careers and companies to build a strong Ontario for generations to come."

I support this petition and affix my signature to it, and page—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. The member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I have signatures on a petition for justice and MNR compliance to OMB and ARA legislation [*inaudible*] from Nichols Gravel Ltd.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas officials of MNR Aylmer district April 1, 2003, illegally imposed on licence 103717 without legislative or delegated authority preconditions to be completed prior to operation of the quarry, which in fact were impossible to complete without quarry operations, and then used ARA legislation to revoke the licence for non-compliance, when to this date no ‘operational licence’ has yet been delivered to Nichols Gravel Ltd. under direction of OMB order 1194;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“For an order to the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Attorney General to comply with the legislation of the Aggregate Resources Act, OMB Act 86(1), to Superior Court judgment order July 23, 2007, to OMB order 1194, and the court (June 15, 2006 judicial review declaratory order to attachment ‘A’ to conditions of licence 103717) to which these two ministries and the Ontario Legislature remain in contempt of court for failure to respond to a petition of April 21, 2009, P-23, which previously identified this legislation and court orders;

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“And a further order to request the RCMP to investigate the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Attorney General for conspiracy to restrict competition, contrary to the federal Combines Act, s. 45(c), abuse of discretionary authority to obstruction of justice through numerous withdrawals of criminal charges to the continued enforcement of the illegal revoke of licence 103717 based on preoperational conditions not directed at OMB order 1194 or licence 103717.

“Reference: www.injusticecanada.com, miscarriage of justice series 1 to 10.”

I affix my signature to these other signatures.

### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of the northeast, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government” has made PET scanning “a publicly insured health service...; and”

That since “October 2009, insured PET scans” are “performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with” Health Sciences North, “its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through” Health Sciences North, “thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition and ask page Shanice to bring it to the Clerk.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** This is from parents in the Avalon community of Ottawa–Orleans.

“To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas the current enrolment of Avalon Public School is 687 students;

“Whereas the student capacity of the school is 495 students, as determined by the Ministry of Education’s own occupancy formula;

“Whereas the issue of overcrowding and lack of space makes it impossible for Avalon Public School to offer full-day kindergarten until the overcrowding issue is addressed;

“Whereas Avalon Public School is located in a high-growth community;

“Whereas the enrolment at Avalon Public School is expected to continue rising at a rate of 10% to 15% a year for the foreseeable future;

“Whereas the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board has made building a new school in Avalon a top capital priority;

“We, the undersigned, call on the province of Ontario and Ministry of Education to provide the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board with the necessary funding to build an additional school in Avalon, to open no later than September 2014.”

I agree with this petition and I send it forward with Sabrina.

### WATER QUALITY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition with 111 signatures from the township of Front of Yonge and the village of Mallorytown. I want to thank Mayor Roger Haley of the council and especially Dana and Mike Purcell for their initiation on this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas everyone believes Ontarians should have access to safe drinking water; and

“Whereas, under the Clean Water Act, 2006, source water protection committees must establish wellhead protection areas around municipal drinking water systems; and

“Whereas the well located at the Miller Manor housing complex in the village of Mallorytown has historically—and incorrectly—been defined as such a system; and

“Whereas maintaining the definition of the Miller Manor well as a municipal drinking water system is not in keeping with the intent of the legislation and would unnecessarily burden residents and businesses in



Mallorytown with regulations that will reduce property values and eliminate future economic development;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, call on the Minister of the Environment to recognize that the Miller Manor well has been improperly classified and issue an order to exempt it from the scope of work being undertaken by the Catarqui Region Conservation Authority source water protection committee."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and I'll send it to the table with page Vincent.

#### TAXATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this really short petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario....

To "take the unfair HST off of ... home heating...."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Katarina to bring it to the Clerk.

#### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease is a degenerative brain disease that causes thinking and memory impairment. Alzheimer's disease is progressive, worsens over time, and will eventually lead to death;

"Whereas there are an estimated 181,000 Ontarians diagnosed with Alzheimer's and related dementia today, and that number is set to increase by 40% in the next 10 years;

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease creates social, emotional and economic burdens on the family and friends of those suffering with the disease;

"Whereas the total economic burden of dementia in Ontario is expected to increase by more than \$770 million per year through to 2020;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to establish an Alzheimer's advisory council to advise the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on matters pertaining to strategy respecting research, treatment and the prevention of Alzheimer's and other related dementia."

Mr. Speaker, this petition comes from the people of Sault Ste. Marie. I've signed my name. I agree with the petition and will give it to page William.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Unfortunately, that concludes the time available for petitions this afternoon.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### 2012 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 19, 2012, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** When we last discussed this item, the member from Durham had the floor, and I now—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure today, on government order number 2, resuming the debate on approving the government's budgetary policies. Really, that's the contradiction here: We can't approve of these policies that don't address the size and cost of government and the whole cost of waste and scandalous activities going on.

I have a few things I have to take care of; one is turning off my cellphone.

Earlier today, in the tribute to Ray Haggerty, the member from Welland South—almost all the members—commended him for his frugality and his sense of loyalty to his constituents, and I think all members feel that way. A comment was made that his wife, Marie, was his best adviser in his financial things, who took care of business. Well, I would call on the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Finance, Dwight Duncan, to call Marie and ask for her advice and what she thinks of what Dalton McGuinty is doing to the senior citizens in the province of Ontario.

Now, the family might be watching, and I would say email them and let them know, because really what this budget does is it raises taxes. It raises fees, your licence, all those things. It does everything, and it affects seniors. Look at your energy bill as an example. So that's why I think the people of Ontario need to be paying attention, speak to their counterparts and follow up.

Our leader, Tim Hudak, has made it clear to us that we can't be trapped in the false discussion here about this or that trade-off, when clearly Don Drummond—and as I say, I have the greatest respect for the former deputy minister, Paul Martin's finance deputy minister, and his calling on the government at the time in his report. I have a copy of the report here. Along with Mr. Drummond, it's important to put this on—Dominic Giroux, who's a commissioner, he's the president and vice-chancellor of Laurentian University, was also on there. Susan Pigott, who was a commissioner—and she's the vice-president of communications and community engagement at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, CAMH, in Toronto. These are qualified people. They're people who aren't of any political persuasion—not so much, anyway, in the most obvious sense. Although they were picked by Premier McGuinty, and they probably gave them the answer—"This is the answer we'd like you to provide."

But let's put this in context. I see the member from Ottawa-Orléans is here. If you put it in context, Mr. McNeely, here's the deal. It's important to wrap this up, Mr. Speaker, in terms of—prior to the election, there's a report; it's required by law. You got a copy of it. Every member got a copy of it. This report was sent to all MPPs in June, dated June 28, from Jim McCarter. He's the Auditor General for Ontario. This is the Auditor General's Review of the 2011 Pre-Election Report on Ontario's Finances. In this report, the Auditor General, in June 2011, told everyone, including the Premier and the

Minister of Finance, that you have a structural deficit. He told them.

Now, it's important; this sizes it up. What did Premier McGuinty do? This is all factual. What he did is he appointed this commission I've just outlined, Mr. Drummond. So he took the whole issue of the budget off the table. It wasn't discussed during the election. What a shameful shell game. When I think of it, it's almost like chess. It's sort of like you have to take the rook and take out the bishop and all these things.

1420

Here's what that report said, that the assumptions both on the revenue and expenditure side were aggressively optimistic. I'm not plagiarizing here. This is verbatim. On page 18 of that report, here's what it says: "Actual and Projected Average Growth in Program Expenses by Major Sector" as a percentage. In health care, between 2003 and 2011, in an average year they were spending 7.1%. In education, from 2003 to 2011, they were spending 4.8%; post-secondary, 8.6%; children's services, 6.7%; justice 5.8%; other programs, 9.6%. On average, on all the ministries, program spending was going up 7% per year for eight years. They doubled the spending. They doubled the deficit, and they doubled the budget. The people of Ontario should say, "Is it any better?" In fact, it's worse. The conclusion by all the economists, including Don Drummond and these other illustrious leaders, is that it's a mess.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a mess. They said, if they don't change their ways—this is what this vote tomorrow is about—we are going to double the deficit from around \$14 billion to \$30 billion. That's the operating shortfall. That means you're spending more than you're receiving in revenue by \$30 billion.

Where does that go? It goes into the accumulated debt. Well, the debt is going to double.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** It's unsustainable.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** These unsustainable fundamentals are called a "structural deficit." So how can Tim Hudak ever start horse trading, so to speak, with a Premier who doesn't realize he has a spending problem and a Minister of Finance who I don't think cares. They would sooner cause an election or play some shell game like—and then I look at the whole scandal on the Ornge helicopter. My goodness. We called for a select committee on that to get to the bottom of Chris Mazza and the—

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** The truth.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It was a truth commission, really, as our House leader Mr. Wilson says. It's in that vein that I get so frustrated and wondering how functional this place really is.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I need to remind the member that we're discussing the budget motion and ask him to confine his comments to that.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I have the greatest respect for the Speaker, so I'm going to get to the budget.

Here's what it says. In the Drummond report—I'll keep it brief. This is the relevance of the budget motion,

which is to approve the spending, which is impossible. We've established that. Would you agree, Mr. Speaker? I'd like to have your opinion on that, and you'll get to vote later. Hopefully he'll vote with us.

But here's the real issue. There are 362 recommendations. Almost all of them said, "Stop digging."

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I think he needs an hour.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Can I get unanimous consent for an hour, please?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Agreed.

**Interjections:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Durham is seeking unanimous consent to speak for an hour. Agreed? There is no agreement.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Anyway, they don't want to hear the truth.

The critical assessment from my good friend Mr. Shurman and I sat—I listened to his speech. It was an hour. It was an amazing speech. In fact, I have a copy of Hansard. I'm going to use most of his material. But it was a 543-page report, and he gave them clear warning. He says, "Overall, the Drummond report indicates that the province's fiscal situation is worse than people realize. According to Drummond, if no changes are made to the government's policies, programs or practices, the commission projects that Ontario's deficit would reach \$30 billion by 2017-18 and the net debt would reach \$411 billion, equivalent to 51% of GDP."

Let's look at the debt part right now. Interest in Ontario is a function of monetary policy of the federal government; interest is quite low. The reason it's low is because the feds want to keep everybody spending, buying cars and houses and stuff like that to keep the economy—breathe some air into it. The economy otherwise is very flat, soft and fragile, if you read any reports. Interest is low right now and we're paying just over \$10 billion a year in interest to foreign investors or bondholders. Now, if the interest goes up even 1%, that'll cost us \$5 billion extra—additional. You won't get any more services, no more nurses, no more teachers. It will cost you more because you're spending too much. It's like, get rid of the credit card. I suspect in this budget thing, approving the expenditures, it's just not reliable or reasonable to do that.

How do I get these opinions, and why do I get so engaged? I think there's a few things. I'll just put them on the record here. This is an article here—I like to have independent, third party commentaries to legitimize my views. It's an article here from Artuso, from the Queen's Park bureau chief. She says here on February 27, 2009:

"These projections are based on existing spending patterns, and do not include any additional investments to stimulate the economy, Don Drummond said yesterday.

"Even to achieve the deficits"—this is Don Drummond, the expert; he actually knows what he's talking about—"they have to slightly tighten spending growth relative to what it's been in the recent past,"—kind words—"he said in an interview. 'It's a lot higher than people are thinking'"—referring to the deficit—"and it's



a graphic illustration to me that there is a structural deficit in Ontario.” That’s 2009.

They’ve known about this. They didn’t need the Auditor General’s report in 2011; they’ve known about it. They still know about it. The question then becomes: What have they done about it? Nothing. They bought every vote, you could say, with the Working Families and the rest of it.

Another article from the Financial Post: It says, “Ontario Budget 2011: Not Credible.” This is by economists. This isn’t some political tripe by some GR person in some highly paid office—probably working for the Premier.

Here’s another one. This is a very important one, too. I think these are part of important things. This is a report—the first piece of advice is from Paul Martin’s Deputy Minister of Finance blue-ribbon committee, who this morning called—one of Canada’s most respected economists said in his recommendations that there’s a structural deficit.

John Manley, the Liberal finance minister, said, “The single most important thing you could do to secure the future of the province is to rally your caucus and the population of Ontario behind a declaration....

“I am proposing a war on the provincial debt.”

Paul Martin, and now we’ve got it from John Manley. These are highly-regarded Liberals—which is a kind of contradiction—but they’re saying right there that there is a problem, and they’re people I pay attention to when I read this stuff. There’s more to it.

I can only continue to say—an open letter here, written by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives. Now, these people are leaders in the economy, if you will. John Manley is the president. Here’s his letter, an open letter. He says that the single most important thing they can do is declare war on the provincial debt.

There’s another, Prospects for Ontario’s Prosperity. Have a look at that report from the competitive task force. There is no credible expert who hasn’t got the same message that our leader, Tim Hudak, is saying: Stop digging; just put the shovels down. Put your hands on the desk and leave things alone. But what they’ve done—they’ve increased spending by over \$1 billion in this budget.

When I look at the pages, I’m starting to feel sorry for them, because they’re spending your future. You think tuition is high now? If Premier McGuinty sticks around, it will be twice what Quebec’s is, and the kids are all upset there.

During the election, there were a few things that surprised me, too. This is quite a good article on the green jobs. What are their strategies? What are the jobs of the future? I put to anyone viewing today, call me. I worked in personnel for 10 years and—what are the jobs of the future? Everybody can’t work for the public sector. I respect and indeed honour the public sector. Nurses, doctors, teachers, environmentalists—the whole group, absolutely critical, including the people who run this place. However, if you have no economy, who’s paying

them? Where does the money come from? Where does the money get generated from? Certainly not in here. We spend money.

Here’s an example: his Green Energy Act, Bill 150. It’s related to this—

*Applause.*

**Mr. John O’Toole:** See, there are three members of cabinet here, and they’re all applauding. Well, there’s a case right there. Check your hydro bill. Under McGuinty, it’s tripled. It’s gone up almost 210%. I think it has increased 210% or 205%.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O’Toole:** The truth is so hard for them to listen to. I’m quoting things here; these are articles, not political stuff. It says, “Dalton’s Mythical Green Jobs.” Listen up: This is an article here on April 15. It’s a recommended reading list. I’ll supply all of them, because they only read the stuff that they’re given to read from the geniuses in the leader’s office.

*Interjection.*

1430

**Mr. John O’Toole:** Well, okay.

A couple of things here. This is from the Auditor General’s report, so quit criticizing me when it’s the Auditor General who says this. Here’s what he says: “McCarter concluded: ‘A majority of the jobs’”—in the Green Energy Act—“will be temporary. The (energy) ministry projected that of the 50,000 jobs, about 40,000 would be related to renewable energy. Our review of this projection suggests 30,000, or 75% of these jobs, would be” in construction and would last only a year or two. “The high proportion of short-term jobs was not apparent from the ministry’s announcement.”

Do you know what those jobs will be? You go to a wind turbine, the only jobs there will be somebody driving a lawnmower cutting the grass. The only one on the solar panels will be a guy with a hose washing down the panels. Nobody works there.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O’Toole:** The former minister of energy and environment, he knows quite a bit. He’s a decent fellow, but the fact is—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O’Toole:** It’s true. I would say, when I look at the—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the member for Durham, but I have to ask the Attorney General and the member for Ottawa-Orléans to come to order.

I return to the member for Durham.

**Mr. John O’Toole:** Thank you. I have so little time left. I may seek unanimous consent.

But anyway, here’s another article from the Globe and Mail on April 6. It says “McGuinty’s Magical, Missing Immigration Tax Credit.” This one here is really good. Unbelievable: during the election, they’ve pulled this shell game out; this little game here caused some ruckus. They promised to give employers a tax credit for hiring

new Canadians. Okay? Where is this in the budget? There's not—this is the missing job game. It's on this cynical approach that even the responses here to my informed remarks are less than satisfactory. I've become so upset by this that I—look, the one thing I've wanted—

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Give us an Ornge commission.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yeah, we would like a select committee—

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** To get to the bottom of it all.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** —to get to the bottom of the scandalous and wasteful spending in health care for eHealth. I see the Minister of Health is here. She promised, when she was here, that she would have the select committee, that she would honour it. We're calling the members here to vote today on having a select committee, on establishing a select committee investigating the scandalous spending on the Ornge helicopters. Unless I get a significant and honest response to this, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. O'Toole has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1433 to 1503.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would ask the members to please take their seats.

Mr. O'Toole has moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and be counted by the table staff.

Please take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and be counted by the table staff.

You may take your seats.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 24; the nays are 39.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

The member for Durham still has the floor, and I return—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to put one more piece of factual information on the record. Allan O'Dette, the chair of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, has put some very relevant comments on the media on the table. What he says here: "The challenges for Ontario"—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Would the member take his seat.

I can't hear the member for Durham. I would ask the House to come to order to allow the Chair to hear the member for Durham.

The Member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** "Thirty-eight per cent of business and civic leaders feel the province is either not that

innovative or not innovative at all." Now, that is an underlying premise in my argument: It's all about jobs and the economy. This is Allan O'Dette, of the chamber of commerce. Do you understand? They get it; you don't get it. On our side, Tim Hudak and the opposition party realize we have to stop spending, especially recklessly.

Mr. Speaker, the points of order have all been raised with respect to the lack willingness of the McGuinty government and the Minister of Health to call a select committee to deal with the Ornge helicopter fiasco, the billion-dollar boondoggle. That's what we're trying to stop here. We want a select committee to deal with this.

I would like all members to familiarize themselves with this document from the chamber. It says here, "Ontario is facing the perfect storm of fiscal pressures. Deficit elimination is a top priority."

**Interjection:** Six, five, four three, two, one.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I seek unanimous consent for more time.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I am going to give the member from Durham more time, because I have twice had to interrupt him because of interjections. Secondly, I would again ask the House not to count down when a member is concluding their remarks. It's extremely disrespectful and leads to disorder.

I'm going to return to the member from Durham and allow him to conclude his remarks.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Within the next 40 minutes, I'll conclude my remarks.

I think this is a very important reference in this time when we're all concerned that there could be an election. What we're saying on this side is this: We need to address the size and cost of government and make it more affordable for investment in Ontario. We have to be competitive. It's about our young people, Mr. Speaker. On jobs and the economy, there's no plan.

We certainly can't support this budget. I'm not certain about the NDP; I think they're waffling. But anyway, thank you for the time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, I want to thank the member—always interesting to listen to my friend the member for—

**Interjection:** Durham.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Durham. Sorry, I'm terrible with riding names.

He certainly always gives an interesting perspective in whatever debate, and he's certainly not bashful about rising in the House and expressing his views. I just want to make those points.

I just wanted, for the record, to say that this has certainly been an interesting process, yet to be finalized. But I've got to say, in the end, that I will say more when I get to my speech.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?



**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I want to pick up on a couple of points that the member from Durham made. First of all, the whole question about jobs: We know that the greatest need out there right now is the creation of more jobs in the province of Ontario. Having said that—yeah, that's the real issue; that's what people are concerned about. We've got to get that unemployment rate down. So I can't for the life of me understand, Speaker, since we all basically agree on that, why the opposition party has voted against a continuation of the eastern Ontario development fund and the creation of the southwestern Ontario development fund.

I can tell you that the eastern Ontario development fund has worked extremely well. It has invested some 55 million of our tax dollars in about, let's say, 150 different companies to create a minimum of about 5,000 new jobs in eastern Ontario. It is a program that has worked. It is a program that we truly believe in, on this side of the House. That's why we want to take that same program and put it into southwestern Ontario.

It has worked. I can name for you the companies in my area that have benefited from that, that have grown employment: Metalcraft Industries, Bombardier among others, a high-tech company that makes solar panels etc.

So I would like to ask particularly those Conservative members from eastern Ontario and from southwestern Ontario why they voted against the continuation of the eastern Ontario development fund and why they are against setting up a similar fund in southwestern Ontario, when we all know that that fund has worked extremely well. It has looked after the greatest need in this province, and that is the creation of new, sustainable jobs.

1510

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before we carry on, I'm going to again remind the members that the questions and comments are supposed to pertain directly to the speech that has just been made.

The member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you, Speaker. I will endeavour to follow that directive.

I want to congratulate the member from Durham, who I would have to say—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** And he's applauding very loudly. I want to say that this member is probably the best utility member in this entire House. By utility member, I mean this: He speaks about anything, any time, anywhere for as long as you want, and he knows his subject, as was evidenced by his comments on the budget.

Look, here's the bottom line: What this member demonstrated with the knowledge that he put before us in debate today is what we know to be true of the budget that is in debate. You cannot take a sow's ear and turn it into a silk purse, and that's what would have been required for our party to get behind this budget. You didn't give us anything to work with, so we decided not to work with you. The sooner the people of Ontario understand what it is, what kind of mediocrity we are being faced with when it comes to fiscal reform and fiscal respon-

sibility and fiscal management in the province of Ontario, the better off we'll all be.

Kudos to the third party. They want to keep things alive and want to keep a discussion going. I don't argue with anybody's principles. What I argue with, and what my friend from Durham argues with, is the fact that in the case of this budget, we're not dealing with principles. We're dealing with expediency. We're dealing with a government that puts forward a report like the Drummond report and then picks and chooses like so many cherries off a tree and says, "We like that, but we don't like that," and at the end of the day takes us down a path that will surely lead us to financial ruin, that will lead us to a \$30-billion projected deficit inside of the next four years, that will lead us to untenable debt on the provincial level that we can't afford.

It's that simple, and that's why tomorrow, when the vote comes at noon, this party will stand en masse and vote no.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened with great interest to my friend from Durham, as I always do. I must say, I admire his taste in ties today.

He has worked very hard, as he always does. He knows his subject, although we do not always agree on that on which he speaks. I have to say, we come from diametrically opposed viewpoints on many issues, but he is always well researched and he always comes up, I think, with interesting arguments. His quotes from the chamber of commerce, his quotes from other sources, are always on point and are well made.

I want to comment as well that I was not surprised when he stood up and thought it was an important time to move an adjournment. But he does that in terms of his own desire to have, I think, this House work a little better than it otherwise should. I can understand the frustration that he feels in terms of some of the other issues that he tried to raise and got admonished for by the Chair, by the Speaker, in terms of Ornge and the all-party select committee. But notwithstanding that, I commend him for taking the views that he does.

Now, I know that he has stated and will continue to state and his caucus will continue to state that they will not be supporting the government's budget, and that is what this debate was about. That comes as no surprise. But I also must state that if he wanted to change that budget, there was ample opportunity for members of the official opposition to do that. They chose not to do that. They chose to be obstructive in view of that. So, if there are any changes that come about, they will not come about from anything that they did themselves.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I return to the member for Durham, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I thank the member from Timmins-James Bay. I do await his response. Like my own, they're always relevant.

The Attorney General from Kingston and the Islands, show some respect. You're in cabinet; you know how bad it is. Tell the people of Ontario the truth.

The finance critic from Thornhill—I have the greatest respect. He can speak for an hour because he's used to having his own radio show.

The member from Beaches—East York commented on ties. He has the consummate collection of ties. But I think he did explain the adjournment and the reason I was so frustrated that they wouldn't listen even to the NDP and their critic as well on the Ornge helicopter issue and our member from Aurora, Mr. Klees, and Ms. Witmer and others that have spoken on the issue. Why wouldn't they settle down and have a select committee? What's the problem here? Working together—you always like to use that term.

I just want to sum up by saying clearly for the people who may have been listening: I've tried to cite indisputable evidence that you're on the wrong track. Mr. McCarter's report prior to the election said that you had a structural deficit and he said you can't solve it. Then you commissioned Mr. Drummond—highly regarded, highly respected—and he came up with a treatise on how poorly you're managing the province. If you don't make changes you're going to double the deficit, double the debt, and it's all future taxes for our children. That's the dilemma we're faced with.

In conclusion, I'll read some of the independent editorial pieces. "Ontario's Budget 2011: Not Credible," and it goes on to vilify you. There's the Toronto Star, your briefing papers, "Ontario Given Stark Road Map." All of the articles that I've read—here's the difficulty. I have lost confidence in Premier McGuinty and his finance minister. They lack the discipline, in my view, to make the difficult but necessary decision to make Ontario strong once again. That is why I can't support the budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order. The member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm just waiting for the mike—there we go. I believe we have unanimous consent that we're going to change the order, by which the Liberal Party will go ahead of us and it will revert back to New Democrats once the Liberals have done their 20 minutes and 10 minutes for questions and comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is there unanimous consent to allow the New Democrats and the government side to exchange their opportunities to speak and trade them equally? Agreed? Agreed.

The member for Ottawa—Orléans.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in this House to speak to the budget. I'd like to start off with: We've heard a lot about how—

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Sharing your time.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm sharing my time with the member for—

**Interjection:** York West.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** For York West. I think I've mentioned that.

I'd like to start off with a couple of quotes. "The challenge for this government in this budget was to provide a credible repair plan.... And so it has. It has provided a broad-based plan—detailed, strategic—that they hope will keep them on the deficit reduction track even with more moderate growth." That was Mary Webb, senior economist of Scotiabank.

I'd also like to quote from Janet Ecker. "To get there, the government is making some tough but necessary choices." Janet Ecker, president, Toronto Financial Service Alliance.

A third quote: "And while we have questions about some of the individual items, we strongly support their efforts to eliminate the deficit. It is an important step for Ontario's future economic growth and will help support continued growth of financial service jobs in the province." Janet Ecker, president, Toronto Financial Services Alliance.

I think there have been a lot of discussions about the five-year plan that we have proposed. The slash-and-burn alternative was not one that we have chosen. We have chosen a good plan that takes us, by 2017-18, to a balanced budget, and that is extremely important.

I think that if we go back to 2003, we can see the impacts of a slash-and-burn approach. We did have a major economic downturn in 2009 where we lost 300,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector. Many issues made 2009-10 very difficult years for this province. We have to build out of that major recession. We have to do better than the European economies, who are really struggling, and the US, which is really struggling. We have had a good record of job production in Ontario, a lot, I think, due to having supported the HST when we had to. It was a difficult decision for our government a couple of years ago to bring in the HST. Governments had tried it before and had run into difficulty, but we did it successfully and it is paying off in job creation now—46,000 jobs created in Ontario in the last month. So we're going in the right direction.

1520

If you look back at the option to a five-year plan which is going to slowly get us out of the deficit to a balanced budget—a strong five-year plan where we're going to respect all the contributors to this great province, where we're going to do it in a reasonable fashion. We can look back at what happened when we closed hospitals, when we closed schools, when we didn't invest in infrastructure. Certainly, in 2003, when we took over, that was the time that we had to rebuild our energy infrastructure. We had to rebuild our schools, had to rebuild our hospitals which had been closed. We had to rebuild our universities and colleges, and so we have done that over the years.

If you look at some of the decisions that have made Ontario a much better province—full-day kindergarten. It's extremely important. Full-day kindergarten is something that was looked at as something we should take out of our spending.

I have a grandchild now and he started in full-day kindergarten in grade 3. Logan goes to school not far



from where we live. When we go by there, that's his school. He's now in his second year of full-day kindergarten and will be going into grade 1 next year. This little guy already speaks French. It's just amazing. He went to École élémentaire catholique Arc-en-ciel in Orléans. It's his school. His brother's coming along, and when we go by that school, the brother, who's three, says, "That's my school, too." They have a little arguments over that, but they're very proud of that school. He'll be starting there. These are some of the things we've done over the last two years.

One of the things I'm proudest of in what Ontario has done and continues to do: We're getting out of coal. We'll be out of coal in 2014. We're going to be the first government that I know of in the world that has gotten out of coal. Even now, we see that coal is being promoted to provide energy to the oil sands out west, a new coal plant which will keep spewing carbon dioxide into the air for the next 50 years. We got out of coal. It was an expensive thing to do. The people in Ontario have been very supportive of us getting out of coal, and that is just wonderful.

Another thing that we're keeping in this budget, very important and it helps poorer families, is the Ontario child benefit. Those are important dollars that flow to those parents who need it, based on each child. It's over \$1,000 a year. I think it's at \$1,100 and it's going to go up another \$100. That, in itself, is something that's very important to help take children out of poverty.

I have to commend the Liberal women's caucus for doing the right things in many issues. They have brought issues forward and it's become the law of the land. That's part of our budget, and I really have to congratulate them, that they have stuck to the important things and have made Ontario much better as a result.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act—we got that going in Ontario. In Ottawa, when I was there from 2000-03—it continues to be a very important part of our government, of what we want to do. I was at an event this morning, representing the minister, which was just congratulating young people who had broken the habit. It was wonderful to see that that's continuing, and we are getting away from that terrible scourge. Some of those dollars still flow to the Ontario Cancer Society from the province for programs like that.

Banning the cosmetic use of pesticides was something that has been very important since we brought it in in 2003. That's something that has been well accepted by Ontarians and has decreased the rates of some of the diseases for kids. It was an important decision to make. We could never get that as part of the legislation in Ottawa. But here in the province, we were able to get that through, and so now the whole province has the same legislation, again, banning the cosmetic use of pesticides.

Smaller class sizes have been argued as something that we could take out of our spending this year. Smaller class sizes are extremely important, and that has shown up throughout the measurements of how good our education system is. We are now the leader in the English world

and in the top five in the world in education systems, and that's certainly part of it.

The higher graduation rates are another result of putting those extra dollars into education and keeping those people in our high schools, where there's early intervention, where these kids have an opportunity if they have technical strengths that aren't showing up under the old system. We've taken the percentage of graduation from high school from 68% to 83%, and we have almost 100,000 kids that have graduated from high schools that would not have, under the old system.

These are things we have to keep. These are extremely important to us, and we can't go back on that.

We have the lowest surgeries in the country, and we can't start taking money out of health care on a big scale and closing hospitals, as was done in the 1990s. That was not fair to the people of Ontario. That was not the right way to do it.

I'll just go back. I forgot and wanted to mention that if we had taken the full-day kindergarten out; if we had gone back to the old class sizes; if we had taken all those people out without early intervention and helping the kids in school, we could have saved a lot of dollars, but it would have been 20,000 teachers and teachers assistants, and other personnel that are in schools, out on the streets at the wrong time. I think people cautioned us against that approach. We know that's not a good approach. We have to keep people working. We're going to have to negotiate hard to make sure we can save those things in the system.

Renewal of infrastructure was obviously a big job that we had to do, starting in 2003. So there's a strong, robust, three-year plan to continue with infrastructure under Minister Chiarelli. That is important. We have to keep the construction jobs there as well. We have to keep renewing our infrastructure. That's a big part of our economic future.

We uploaded billions of dollars from the municipalities. That was a problem that resulted from downloading which occurred in the 1990s. We had promised the municipalities in our memorandum of agreement to continue the uploading of those dollars, and we have, and we're going to. I think that's the type of thing that—we have to encourage our municipalities, who are in difficult times as we are.

Green energy has been something that is very important to me. I think that's where we have to go. We have to be concerned with the environment. Coal is gone. We have to promote renewables; it is creating jobs. A lot of people know now about conservation through the smart meters and all that. That whole program—I was very pleased to be part of that when it came in. I think it's extremely important that we continue to do that as we go forward.

I think that we've come up with a budget which is a budget that we can go forward with, that takes us to a balanced budget by 2017-18. We're maintaining those very important aspects of conservation, of education, of health care. This is where we have to be at. It's going to

be tough. It's not going to be easy for anyone. The five years that MPPs won't get a salary increase: That's fair. We're going to have to deal with all our teachers and groups etc. But if everybody takes up their part, then that will be fair.

If I give up speaking now, then the other member will have his part. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm very pleased to have the next few minutes and make some remarks on the budget that, hopefully, this House will be dealing with tomorrow, and we'll have already been done by this particular time, hopefully. And why not?

I think the direction that we have presented in this budget follows exactly what the Premier and we were saying during the election last year. We have addressed ourselves on the main things that are of interest to the people of Ontario; that is, health care, education and creating jobs, Speaker, and I think the budget reflects all of that.

1530

In the meantime, of course, we all know that we had the so-called Drummond report recommending a number of things. We did say that without touching those very important issues such as education, health care, and job creation programs—and social services, I should add as well, Speaker—we will be managing to balance the budget for the years that we have said: 2017-18. Therefore, we are here today addressing, very much, the content of the budget that is in front of us today.

We have heard from the opposition. The Conservatives decided, even before they had a chance to read the budget, that they would be voting against it. I have to say that Premier McGuinty did extend to the opposition leaders the opportunity to come forward with their proposals—and we would be listening. The Premier, I think, did listen. Unfortunately, the Conservatives decided not to support it. Therefore, they chose not to sit at the table and come up with any proposals, reasonable or otherwise.

Instead, with the NDP, we have seen that they have been negotiating all along, almost on a daily basis. We have seen a number of proposals.

I hope that common sense, if I can put it that way, Speaker, will prevail and we will have the budget approved by tomorrow at this time. We all are going to be winners. The people of Ontario are going to be winners.

This is no time to throw Ontario into an unwanted election. Never mind when we say, "We have to put more money into programs"—and why not—and then we say, six months after an election, "Let's go and splash another \$100 million or more into another election." According to the mood of the people out there, not only don't they want an election—I don't think it's necessary—but it may cause to deliver exactly the same terms and conditions that we see today. I wonder if it's really all worth it.

I think all of us should look at our own pride and say, "As much as, maybe, we should do certain things for the benefit of the people of Ontario, it is not the time to go into an election." We have to look around, Speaker. We know that news comes to us from all sides, internally and externally; through the radio, newspapers, from our neighbours in the south, the Europeans—there are troubles all over the place. And you know what? We are so thankful that we are living in a country which has been managing its affairs in, I would say, an extremely good manner. It's the envy of the world.

In Ontario, Speaker, we are not privy to the situation that is going around in the world. We have to look at the economic situation in the face, as it is. We are suffering some of the consequences. I have to say that we are lucky with the way we have been able to manage the economy and our affairs today. Sure, we have some deficits; they will be paid. We have to share a little bit of the pain, and I think it's quite fair.

I think our cost of living, our way of living, is excellent. I think we should be very proud of the way we are conducting ourselves, the opportunities that we have in Ontario, especially for our young people.

If the Premier has incorporated in the budget the fact that we want to maintain the education system as we did say we would, I think we should be proud that we have maintained that particular promise in the budget.

The 30% tuition cut, I think, speaks for itself. It's helping not only our students in college and universities, but I think it's doing wonderful things for parents as well.

Full-day kindergarten, with all due respect to the opposition and even the Drummond report: Yes, it costs money, but then, Speaker, we are talking about the future of our children—the future of our children. We can't find anyone that says it's money thrown into the wind—absolutely not. It is doing great for families, especially young families with young kids going to school. By the time, in a year or two, full-day kindergarten is throughout the province, in every school, then every family will be really that much ahead because they will be saving about \$6,400 or \$6,500 per kid—per kid. They will have to worry just about doing their own thing, going to work, without having difficulties looking after the kids.

On the job side, I think we have seen what is coming from the rest of the world, and we have to say that we have created over 340,000 jobs. And in the last month alone—I mean this wasn't us; it was the Canadian government announcing the number of jobs created in Canada. Ontario was leading the way with 46,000 new jobs in the month of March. Speaker, I think this speaks well for the economy in the province and I think we should be proud. We should be proud to speak on behalf of our province of Ontario, for the people—day and night, I have to say, because we have lots of people working night shifts. I think we should be lauding those people because they are committed to the progress and strengthening of the economy of Ontario.

So, Speaker, I hope by tomorrow we can all rally around and say—you know what?—we've got to keep on



going. We've got to keep our province strong. We have to make sure that our health care is provided.

Speaker, I don't have the time, but I would love to read you the list of hospitals that we are looking to get under way.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** You've got a minute. Give us the list.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Some of them are already started: Cambridge, Burlington, Wellington-Halton Hills, Perth-Wellington, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Elgin-Middlesex, Leeds-Grenville.

Look at the transit area: Burlington—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Markdale.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Which one was yours?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Markdale; is it on the list?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Yes, it's there. I don't have the full list because it's too long. With all of that we have a big discussion, LRTs or subways—\$8.4 billion. I mean, this is the taxpayers' money. This is to create jobs for Ontario, and we will. I'm blessed in my area: There is the Finch LRT. If we get the LRT or the subway, I'm happy both ways because it helps the local economy. It helps the economy in Ontario. It's good for the people in my riding. It's good for the people of Ontario. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I just want to use my time to make a couple of comments, particularly around those that the member from Ottawa-Orléans began with. When he talked about the hospitals, I immediately thought of the two major hospitals that serve my riding, which under a Progressive Conservative government undertook a massive expansion, which, I want to add, was continued by the current government. So when we're talking about hospital building and hospital updating, I don't think that either party can take a back seat.

The other issue that the member raised—or one of them—was the pride which he had over Smoke-Free Ontario. Well, I guess I would wish that he would also take on the contraband tobacco issue with the same kind of enthusiasm, because as he is talking about how youth are being discouraged from smoking and how wonderful this is, on the other side of the road, quite frankly, everywhere across this province, youth are able to access tobacco without any rules, without any opportunity for—frankly, if there is such a thing—a safe cigarette. It's certainly contributing to the growth of young smokers.

He talked about the economy, and I guess there are three things that come to my mind: first of all, the fact that we have a \$15.3-billion deficit that is only going to grow under this budget. We have 500,000 people that are unemployed in this province today. The third number is the \$10-billion cost of servicing the debt—the debt itself is approaching \$400 million. Those three numbers make it impossible to support this budget.

1540

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'd like to thank the members from York West and Ottawa-Orléans for their comments. I know we don't always agree on some of those comments, but I certainly believe in freedom of speech and the democratic process.

I had the opportunity on Friday, when we left here last week, to go to a poverty forum in my riding, hosted by one of the local churches. It was well attended by approximately 50 people on a Friday evening. So people gave up from 5 o'clock till 9 o'clock on a Friday evening to discuss poverty in my community. The pastors from the church and members of the parish were there, and there were people from community programs, all there to talk about poverty and the ever-growing number of people who are finding themselves in poverty in our communities.

The churches told me that they can't keep up. Just about every church in the community has a food bank, in addition to the Salvation Army and people who just provide shelters and food banks. They can't keep up continuing to be the last resort not only for people on ODSP and Ontario Works, but for the working poor who are living in our communities and having to rely on food banks to feed their families.

I think that's an important piece that we need to be doing better on as a province, and we need to be finding ways to actually support these people in our communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, I want to thank the member for York West and the member for Ottawa-Orléans for their comments on the budget motion today.

I do want to begin by acknowledging that today is Prostate Cancer Awareness Day here in the Legislature. We're all wearing the ties and scarves to honour the great work that goes on. I will give a nod to the group in Thunder Bay that is presided by Phil Junnila. My father was one of the original members of the group in Thunder Bay. They do great work in terms of raising funds, awareness and support. I want to thank the local group in Thunder Bay as well as the rest of them across the province that continue to advocate on this particular issue. I'm proud to be wearing the tie today.

When we talk about the budget—I had an opportunity to speak about this a bit last week as well—I frame it for the people of Ontario who are interested in this issue. And there are many who are, given the discussions I'm having in my riding of Thunder Bay-Atikokan about what is at risk and what we've chosen to protect in this budget document. I like to speak primarily about a couple of things, health care and education, which we know most people in the province see as their two first priorities when it comes to the expenditure of provincial dollars.

Right now, we know there are negotiations going on with the medical community and the education sector, but I can't help but remind people that today in Ontario there are 8,500 to 10,000 more teachers working in our

schools than there were when we came to government in 2003. And in spite of Drummond's recommendations, we've decided to go forward with full-day kindergarten and maintain smaller class sizes. Do you know who benefits most from those two decisions besides the students and the parents?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Teachers.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Teachers, but I would say even more specifically to my friend from Peterborough, it's young teachers. Those jobs are the ones those young people graduating from faculties of education are moving into. It's tough times, and we're doing the best we can in a number of sectors. But that decision in our budget speaks volumes to our commitment to education and health care as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to respond to the members from Ottawa—Orléans and York West. I think they really missed the mark here, the opportunity to declare their concern for the future prosperity of Ontario.

Most of the information you see that's not imbued with political spin on it—you'll find out that there's a structural deficit in the province of Ontario. You'll find out you have a Premier and a Minister of Finance who don't recognize that they can't increase spending faster than you can increase revenue. This is what they call a structural deficit.

After being here 17 years, I can say this: The real role of the government is to say "no" at the appropriate time for the appropriate reason, really. Any fool and his money can soon be parted. It's important to say "yes" to many things; I would say that. But at the same time, you shouldn't be more or less buying votes. These various polling things that they do, and they find out which group they can move. That was the new Canadian tax credit they had during the election, which was cancelled. The NDP put out something on the table about a tax credit for job creation, similar to what Bob Rae did in 1994.

I've watched for some time. I find out that I'm becoming a bit cynical, because doing the right thing is often difficult, and I think that's what Don Drummond said.

I know Mr. McNeely is an engineer. He knows that there's a shortfall in infrastructure in the economy of Ontario. The infrastructure is important to build Ontario. The member from York also recognized—she has been here for a long time.

The real issue I'm pleading with you in your response is to address how you're going to fix the problem. If the economy doesn't pick up, are we imitating Greece or Italy? What's the plan here? What's the plan B? Plan A doesn't work, clearly. What's plan B?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. I look to the government, and the member for York West has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I'm very pleased to have heard the comments from the members from Durham, from York—Simcoe and from Welland as well.

The member from Welland was addressing her remarks to having attended a meeting with respect to families and churches and discussing people, low-income families in poverty. I think this is one of the things that we have been addressing in the past eight years as a government, and we keep addressing the same issues in the budget as well, without losing sight, if you will, Speaker, of the pillars that we have always said were in our economic and social economy here: health care, jobs and education.

We have not cut social services. We are still maintaining the same \$100 and \$110 for low-income mothers to assist them, which is \$1,100 and is going to go to \$1,300 a year, come next year. So we haven't cut any of those services.

We still want to keep full-day kindergarten. We still want to make sure that we make it affordable for college and university kids to go to school and learn. We want to give them the opportunity to face the competition that comes not only from within, from our neighbours, but from without. We want to make sure that our young kids will have the best education to face the competition that we are facing in the new world, if you will. We may want to bury our heads in the sand, but this is our reality, Speaker. We have a lot of pressure from all over the world, and unless today we give the opportunity to our young kids, to teach and face that competition, we will be left behind.

We have done—my time is up. Thank you, Speaker, for the time allowed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I think you'll find there's unanimous consent that the House suspend until 4:15 p.m. and that the clock on the budget debate be stopped until the House resumes at 4:15 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader has asked if there's unanimous consent in the House to suspend the proceedings until 4:15 and stop the clock on the budget debate until 4:15. Agreed? Agreed.

As such, this House is suspended until 4:15.

*The House suspended proceedings from 1549 to 1615.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Members will be aware that just recently our leader, Andrea Horwath, had a press conference here at Queen's Park and talked about the details of what was achieved as a result of a pretty hard process that we had to go through in order to try to get some compromises on the provincial budget.

I just want to say from the outset that this is not the budget that I would have written. It's not the budget that Andrea Horwath or any of our members would have written. We think this budget still has some issues that,



quite frankly, are difficult to deal with. But our job here is about making Parliament work and Parliament is about compromise, especially in the time of a minority Parliament. In a time of majority, the government can do what it wants and essentially listen to the opposition make the points. Sometimes we're successful in bending what they do, but in the case of a minority Parliament, that responsibility that we have as opposition parties is much more serious—I wouldn't say much more serious, but the responsibility that we have, we must take much more seriously in a sense of making sure that this Parliament works.

Listen, life is not about easy choices. I want to say that at the outset. The government tabled a motion that New Democrats and Conservatives were unhappy with. The Conservatives decided on their strategy. I won't even touch it, but that is their choice. I'm sure that they had deliberations on how to get there. But we decided on a different track. We thought, as New Democrats, that people sent us here in order to try to get something done. We looked at this opportunity that was presented by way of the budget as, "What can we do in order to be here and to work for the people of Ontario?" Because all of us—I'm not saying that we, as New Democrats, have a monopoly on it—here in this Legislature are here to do the people's work.

That is what drove Andrea Horwath, that is what drove this caucus, that is what drove the process that we went through. Was it easy? Absolutely not. It was rather difficult because we had to wrestle with a number of questions. Number one: What we would put on the table? I'm going to talk about that in a second. Once we put it on the table and the government showed resistance, to which point are we willing to compromise in order to get an agreement? And sure, you know what? I'd love to get a whole bunch of things in life. There's a whole bunch of things that I would like, but sometimes you've got to do what's in the realm of possibility, and some fights will have to continue. I will talk about that in a minute.

We went through a process, as a caucus, where we said, "Listen, where does the budget fall short?" We said, "Well, when it comes to fairness, clearly, this budget doesn't do that." We felt that the budget, as presented, essentially put the onus of trying to balance the books over the next number of years on a certain class of people, working-class people and the poor. We thought the people at the top were getting off pretty scot-free. There's a real sense in our society—not only here in Ontario, but I think around the world; you see it in France and other countries as things develop. There's a sense that we were plunged into a recession, almost an economic meltdown, because there are certain people at the top who took advantage of the situation and gamed the system, as we saw in the United States, with a lot of the dealings of some of the financial institutions there and others around the world. The response was that we couldn't let them fail. Remember that old comment: "They're so big, these companies; you can't make them fail"? The taxpayers across the world were asked to pony

up and put money out of their wallets in order to allow these people who caused the problem to survive. There was going to be, people thought, a quid pro quo. People thought, "Well, if I do that, certainly to God now they're going to learn a lesson and maybe I'll be in a better place." What we learned at the end of the process is that these guys are making more money than they ever have before, and on the taxpayers' dime.

What we said was, "Listen; enough is enough. We need to some way show that all of us are in this together." So, the first thing we did and we put forward in the last election, as we did after the October 6 vote, we said, "We think there should be a freeze on corporate tax." We think giving another reduction to taxes to the corporations is the wrong way to go, because quite frankly, we don't think it gets results. Also, it sends the wrong signal: Why should the corporation get a tax cut and the person on welfare or ODSP is told that they get a freeze? Why should somebody get a tax cut when women and men are trying to get daycare for their children and they're not able to get a daycare spot etc.? The government heeded that call, and I give the government some credit. They decided to put that initially in the budget.

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But we didn't think it went far enough, and that's why we put forward the idea that at the very least there should be a two-point surtax on income over \$500,000. And do you know what? Most people agreed with us. It didn't matter if it was voters who normally vote Conservative, New Democrat or Liberal. People said, "Hey, that's fair. Why should it just be the people at the bottom that pay, and why should it not be the people at the top that are part of the solution?"

We made it a condition of this discussion that we've had with the government—I won't call them negotiations, because they were not negotiations, quite frankly; they were discussions, which is a whole other thing.

We said to the government, through our discussions—I had a series of meetings with the government House leader, along with the two chiefs of staff. I'd like to say good things about Gissel Yanez in regard to the work she did leading up to this, along with myself, and also Chris Morley, from the Premier's office. We made that point. We said, "Listen, we want you to be really clear: If you do not move in a significant way on that issue and others that we have put on the table, we don't want an election but we are certainly prepared to go there."

I give Andrea Horwath great credit for holding to her guns and saying, "You know what? It is a condition." This caucus decided collectively that there were some conditions that we had to have met in order to be able to move forward, and the 2% surtax on \$500,000 was key amongst them, because we believe that allows other things to happen.

I must stand and applaud our leader. Our leader did an amazing job at working this through, always remembering, "It's not about me. It's not about my political fortune. It's about doing what's right for the people who sent us here collectively." And I have to say, she is a very

well thought, well reasoned person, because she always kept her eye on that. Whenever we would get a sense, on the team that dealt with this, that maybe we should go in a different direction, Andrea was always very good at saying, "Remember why we're here. We're here to do the people's work." I've got to say, it is certainly a refreshing way to do politics. After 20-some-odd years in this Legislature, I am reinvigorated on the leadership that Andrea has provided.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, one day it will happen, my friend. It will happen. I won't repeat the heckle.

The point I make is that there are a number of things I would like to have seen that should have been contained in the agreement, and we will continue pushing for those. But I just want to talk a little bit about what was achieved.

The government agreed in the end to a 2% surtax on those people over \$500,000. I think it looks good on all of us, not just New Democrats, to do that. And I urge members, when that bill comes forward, because it will be a separate bill, that we vote together on that particular aspect.

We have found a reprieve of a type for the horse racing industry that we think is important. Is it a save? No. I'm going to be very clear. It is an opportunity for the horse racing industry to sit with government in a process that allows them to figure how to get to the next step, and that next step will have to be defined by that process. But that was a win.

I only wish the government would have had the same largesse when it came to the Ontario Northland and the ONTC. I just want to say for the record now: You think we dropped that one? No way, man. Northerners, we're going to fight for that to the end, and we think we've set the conditions by which it can be done, because the government now has better than half a billion dollars in new revenue, and nobody in northern Ontario and nobody in this province is going to accept, now that we've created the ability to have half a billion dollars, that some of that—\$24 million is all it takes to continue the subsidy to the ONTC.

We said at the table, "Listen, we understand your problem is capital at this point, and maybe what we need to do is take a pause on capital for a year or two and allow things to unfold." If the economy turns around, which it will, we'll then be in a position to invest in Ontario Northland infrastructure, as we do with GO Transit, as we do in Toronto with the TTC and with all the other transits across this province, and as we do when it comes to building freeways and highways in this province. We think that was reasonable.

The government had a different view. They said, "Well, we don't see the ONTC as infrastructure for transportation in northern Ontario the way you do." I love the words of Andrea Horwath, who said to the Premier, "Premier, at one time you used to get it. You understood that the Ontario Northland was part of the transportation infrastructure, and it was good public policy to make sure

that that infrastructure worked. And, yes, it's better for the environment. What happened to you?" For whatever reason, the Premier is deciding not to bend on this one.

I just want to say again for the record: All northern members—never mind northern members; all northerners—are going to continue pushing on that one, because this battle isn't over. There is an ability now, because of what we created with the \$550 million that you get by way of this surtax, to be able to find \$24 million to allow that railway to continue.

We got a huge concession from the government when it comes to the people who are most hard hit in our province, and that's people on ODSP and welfare. The government said, "You know what? We're just going to freeze you." We said that is not acceptable. Enough that people were cut back 24% some years ago under the Harris government and that they were frozen for a time. Freezing them essentially puts them further and further back, putting the pressure for government in the future to put even more in. Even Don Drummond agreed with that principle when he talked about what he did inside his report.

That was a huge win. We got the government to agree that a 1% ODSP and a 1% OW increase was blatantly fair and that we do that as a way of moving to the next step, which is what's going to come out of the Lankin report, and we look forward to seeing what solutions are going to be brought forward when it comes to finding ways to make that system work people better for those people on it.

When it comes to daycare, we are going through a transformation in this province because of what's happening with the creation of full-time JK. I've got to say, where I come from, we've had full-time JK, God, since the time my children went to school—and our children are now in their 30s—so it's not a new concept for us in Timmins and other communities in my riding. But for many people in Ontario, this is a big thing. Moving to full-time junior kindergarten is a big thing, but it creates a problem because the daycare operators, especially the not-for-profits, lose those kids who would normally be in their daycares and who are now going to be in classrooms.

So there needs to be some sort of transition. We put a proposal on the table, and the government initially came back and said they were going to shuffle the deck around. When we figured that out, we said, "No, it's got to be new money." The government gave us—I forget the exact numbers, but it's like \$70 million, \$80 million or \$90 million of brand new money over the next three years to allow that transition to happen and to assist those daycares so that they don't have to close their doors.

I would venture to say that if Andrea Horwath and New Democrats didn't push for that, we would have more daycare closures in this province and that would not be a good thing because I believe daycares are an important way of not only supporting parents getting to work and making sure their kids have a good place, I think it's also an economic development tool when you look at it from that perspective.



We then pushed on the issue of small and rural hospitals. The government is going through a transformation in health care. We sat at the table, myself directly and Mrs. Yanez, to both Mr. Morley and the government House leader, that when it comes to what's going on in health care we agree that we need to put more money into community services. People want to stay at home. They don't want to go to hospital and institutions if they don't have to. The problem is that there's not enough support in the community to make that happen.

My sister, who has just found out that she has breast cancer and has to now go through radiation and chemotherapy, is going to need support so she can continue living alone at home and have the supports she needs as she goes through these treatments. In communities that's hard to do because our CCACs are rationing the amount of hours because there's not enough money in the pot to provide the services necessary so people like my sister can live at home with dignity.

Those I think are good choices. We pushed the government towards that end. They've agreed to continue and put some money into that so that we can make sure we have—I think it's going to work out to three million more hours of home care that's going to be provided to the people of Ontario, and that's going to go a long ways, because in my CCAC alone, I believe, if I remember correctly, we need about a \$10-million infusion in our CCAC for the northeast to be able to meet just the basic needs that are being brought forward now. I think those three million hours will help us get partway there. It's a step in the right direction.

But the problem is that as we move people from institutions into home services, there's also going to be a transformation, a reduction of budgets at hospitals to make that happen. We said, "Whoa, hang on a second. You can't rob from Peter to pay Paul." There's got to be some sort of stability for hospitals, especially small rural hospitals and northern hospitals, so that they don't have to lose their emergency services or lose their acute care beds in ridings like those of my friend across the way from Thunder Bay—Superior North, myself and Mr. Vanthof from Timiskaming—Cochrane, because that's what was going to happen.

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I have been talking to the hospitals in my riding. Timmins and District Hospital, which is the largest hospital, is being told, "You're going to be flatlined to 1% this year," and that's going to represent about a \$6-million cut to their budget. At the same time, they're going to essentially freeze the budgets of the smaller rural hospitals in my riding—Smooth Rock Falls, Kapuskasing, Hearst, Moosonee, Moose Factory, the James Bay area. That's going to mean to say that the rationing of services in those hospitals would have closed things—in Smooth Rock Falls, possibly the emergency room. I'll tell you, the mayor of Smooth Rock Falls, along with the director of the hospital and others, are very concerned that that's where the local LHIN is going.

We've provided an additional \$20 million by way of this agreement so hospitals like Smooth Rock Falls are

able to adjust somewhat their budgets so that they can keep an emergency room open or make sure they don't lose too many acute care beds and to do what needs to be done so we don't end up having small rural hospitals shut their doors in order to do this transformation. I would just add that if you're doing a reduction of services in those areas, everybody's going to go to Timmins, and they're not going to have the money to do it. We need that transition fund in order to make sure that that happens.

We worked hard to get to where we're at now. I just want to say that it is, as in every process, a difficult one. It wasn't easy. It was like literally I've been camped here for about two or three weeks, not being able to get home, because we've had discussions almost every day and on the weekend either with the government or amongst ourselves and then back with the government in order to get to the point that essentially we're at now.

We will allow the government to move forward with their motion tomorrow. How we do that, we'll tell you a little bit later. But I want the government to be clear: This is still a Liberal budget that has some flaws in it. We will do what we have to do to fight for the people that we represent across this province to make sure that we don't fall further behind on some of the issues that I think need to be dealt with.

I think we've created a great opportunity with the \$500 million that will be available as a result of the surtax on people earning over \$500,000. It will allow us to make the fight to say to the government, and I think it's very reasonable one—\$24 million is all we need to save the train. Right? It's not a lot of money.

We're prepared as northerners to roll up our sleeves and say, "Okay, we get it. There have got to be better ways to run that train," so we can make it more efficient. There's nobody at the ONTC, there's not a union member, a management person, a local mayor or a citizen in northern Ontario who doesn't understand that efficiencies always have to be found to make things run better. We understand that the government has a capital problem when it comes to—they've been putting in \$100 million a year—that's their choice, and it's a good one—up until this year to improve the capital on the rail and the buses and others at the ONTC. We're saying: Take a break for a year or two. You don't have to do the capital all at once. We can live what we've got for the next year or two to allow us to figure out how we position the ONTC so it remains intact.

I just want to end on this point because I have two minutes and I raised it in question period today. What members of the government need to understand is that once you remove the subsidy and divest the assets of the ONTC, the buses will continue to run, the ferry service will continue to run, but the train is gone. There's nobody who's going to buy the train. Mike Harris tried this and had to retreat. Why? Because even CN wouldn't be paid to take it—not because it was a bad thing, but there needs to be a subsidy to run it. It's just the reality of life. GO Transit gets a subsidy, Via Rail—everybody. There's not a train service in the world that runs without a subsidy.

Here's the kicker: If you allow that train to go down, every sawmill, every paper mill and every mine along that railway is put at risk. Why? They are hanging on by the skin of their teeth as it is now—Columbia Forest Products, Lecours Lumber, Tembec and others. When you say, "We're no longer going to allow you to ship by rail because we're going to force you to go to roads," it increases their bottom line. The minister who used to be the minister—well, actually still is—the minister of forestry understands this. It will increase the cost of these operations, and some of them will close.

We can't afford to have more closures in northern Ontario. This is an essential part of the infrastructure of this province in order to be able to run not only people up and down the rail but to run our economy.

So I say to the government members: You haven't heard the last of us on the ONTC, because I can tell you, we will still fight for that. At the end of the day, we will win, because ultimately the position we are taking is reasonable. We gave you \$500 million. All the north wants back is \$24 million, and we'll talk about how we make that railway a better place and a better operation for everybody.

With that, I'd like to conclude debate and say that there will be many more opportunities to have these kinds of discussions in the future. This, I think, shows that when we roll up our sleeves and work together, we can make Parliament work.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I really appreciate the comments made by the member from Timmins-James Bay. I get to work with the member in a number of capacities, and there's no question that his party brought a number of key issues to the table in order to improve and enhance the budget document and the budget approach, the fiscal framework that we presented at the end of March.

Not a long time ago, from 1975 to 1981, during a period of minority government that was led by one of Ontario's most distinguished Premiers, Mr. Davis—over that period of time, there were six consensus budgets that were presented to Ontario at that particular time, during that six-year minority government period. If you take the time, Mr. Speaker—and you probably have—to go back and look at those budgets and look at the budget debate during that particular time, there was a lot of give and take from all corners of the House during that six-year period. Of course, such things as rent control were brought in as part of those budget packages.

Certainly, when I was consulting with my constituents just recently during our constituency week, their message was pretty clear to me: that the people of Ontario had made a decision last October. We have a minority government, and it's incumbent upon us all, on all sides of the House, to do our bit and show our leadership, collectively and individually, to make this minority government work.

Certainly, this afternoon, a final package was put into place—not a perfect package, but a package indeed. It'll

allow us to continue to work on all sides of the House over the next number of weeks and months to come on behalf of all Ontarians, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** First and foremost, I'd like to extend to my colleague from Timmins-James Bay, and through him to his sister, our thoughts and best wishes to his sister, who was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. It's something we can all relate to, and we wish her all the very best.

I regard Mr. Bisson from Timmins-James Bay very highly. He has been here for a lot of years, and certainly they came together and they propped up the budget. I don't think that was unexpected by many people across our province and certainly not across our caucus.

The challenge that I see still—and it's why there is a fundamental divide—is, it's yet another tax, really, at the end of the day. It's going to be more spending. It's going to be trading horses to be able to get more money for their areas. You know what? That's the right thing for many people to do, to fight for their constituencies. But at the end of the day, they've added another tax. Whether it's to the wealthy or to the poor, it's still a tax, and it's still something else that people weren't looking for.

Fundamentally, I've got some friends whom I've had that discussion with, who are in that bracket. They said, "Why do you keep coming to me, who create the jobs, who are always the first in line when you go to build the new hospital or the new school or the new library? You come to the wealthy and ask me for the \$100,000 and the \$500,000 gift." If we tax them too high and they start moving, we're going to have a fundamental challenge in our province.

Why do we always look for more rather than restraint? One of our fundamental premises and our concern with this budget is, where is the restraint of spending? Where's the clawing back and saying, "We can't be all things"?

He talked about the train at length. Again, from a rural community, I can understand transportation needs and the issues, but subsidies and the mentality of always having lots of subsidies is only going to get us where we are today: a \$15.3-billion deficit, a \$400-billion debt. We're going to soon have more money in debt than the federal party, the whole Confederation. We can't continue to go there.

What if they hadn't wasted the \$3 billion? Think of the money we would have had then for the train service and other services we want. Speaker, \$15.3 billion—we can't continue to go there.

We still stand opposed to where they were heading—both parties—to spend, spend, spend.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Let's make this one point clear: This is not our budget. It will never be our budget. But what we tried to do is inject a little bit of fairness into this budget.



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We injected a little fairness into this budget by addressing some issues that were on the top of the minds of the people of Ontario. Some of those issues included the fact that if we're going to ask the working people of Ontario, the poor in Ontario, to tighten their belts, if we're going to hit those people who are hard-off, then there should be some sharing of that burden. That's what we tried to inject in this budget: some sharing of that burden, so that the burden doesn't fall on those who are hardest hit. In fairness, a lot—a vast majority—of Ontarians agreed that this was the right thing to do, to inject that fairness, to share that burden.

What we saw in this budget was something that was not what we would have wanted, but what we got movement on were some key issues that matter to the people of Ontario. We saw some movement with respect to child care. We saw some movement with respect to poverty issues, including Ontario Works and Ontario disability. We saw some movement with home care and health care.

The issues that affect Ontario, the issues that affect the people of Ontario, remain, but we will continue to be a voice advocating for the concerns of Ontarians. We will continue to fight for the things that we've raised and will continue to raise. This is only a step in the right direction, but by no means are we satisfied with the entire budget. We are simply injecting that fairness and advocating, on behalf of the people of Ontario, to increase at least some measure of relief for people who are hard-hit, to provide some measure of relief in these difficult times. I think we've done that, and we'll continue to work for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** There's one point on which I'd like to agree with my colleague from Timmins-James Bay: It is indeed a Liberal budget. It's a budget that reduces the deficit. It's a budget that controls spending. It's a budget that heads toward balance. It's a budget that sustains services. Most importantly, it's a budget that involves compromise. It's a budget that the NDP has indicated will pass, because we acted as adults, because we were mature and, most importantly, because we talked to each other.

As a Liberal, I look at the compromise that we're discussing today and I think to myself, "I probably would have wanted a little bit more." As the member from Timmins-James Bay has told us, he said he looked at the compromise and thought, "Well, I probably would have wanted a little bit more." So we both agree there's some more work to do.

One thing I've noticed is that across from me, from where I sit, also sit 17 honest, decent people who have sent a clear message, in their agreement to work with the government today, that they're responsible, mature adults, that they've decided to do the thing that 13 million Ontarians voted to send us here to do, which is to govern this province and to act in the best interests of 13 million people. I think what we've seen here is an

agreement and a compromise that's going to enable us to do that, not to have our fourth election in 18 months, because nobody wanted that. I think everybody gave a little bit here and everybody realized that there's more work to do. In the spirit of co-operation and in the spirit with which Ontarians sent us here to do work on their behalf, I'd like to say to my New Democratic colleagues: I am proud to serve with you. I recognize the compromises that you've made. Together, we're going to go forth on behalf of all Ontarians. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I return to the member from Timmins-James Bay for his reply.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to thank members for their comments. I would just say I disagree vehemently with the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who says that we shouldn't be providing a subsidy to the ONTC. I understand that's the position of your caucus, but, God, even Mike Harris changed his mind on that one—and he was a pretty far right-wing guy—because he understood that if you don't allow the Ontario Northland to run, there are consequences to that. So when he tried to privatize it, he went to Canadian National Railway and said, "Can I make a deal with you?" Then CNR said, "Unless you give me the subsidy, I'm not taking it over." So he said, "Well, if I've got to give a subsidy, I might as well keep it." So we've kept it running since that time.

I disagree with the Conservatives that we shouldn't provide a subsidy. Why is it right to not give a subsidy to the Ontario Northland rail, but we can give a subsidy to GO Transit? Why is it right that you can give a subsidy to the transit services around this province in various cities and towns? Those subsidies are for a reason: because it's part of public policy. It's transportation infrastructure that interconnects with other means of transportation: road, air, rail.

It's also an issue around the environment. Think about the amount of goods we transport out of northeastern Ontario. If we take that off the rail and put it on trucks, it's not only more money to ship, but it's also harder on the environment. Plus, it's harder on our roads.

In the case of some companies, they are completely set with their companies to ship everything by rail, so if you shut the rail down, they've got to put it on a truck, they've got to bring it to somewhere there's a rail and put it back on the rail so they can get it to their customer, who only accepts by train. There's a whole bunch of them. Agrium is exactly in that situation. Agrium would be hard put to stay open if the Ontario Northland shut down—plus other projects that are coming online north of Hearst in regard to what is happening with some of the mining further north of Hearst.

We'll fight hard, and hopefully the government will bend on that one.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before I ask for further debate, I'll remind the House that the House gave consent to allow the New Democrats and the

Liberals to trade their speaking opportunities. So I now look to the Conservative Party for a speaker.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** A point of order: the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I would just ask my colleague from Timmins—James Bay—I did not make a reference specifically to a subsidy to Ontario Northland. I made a general comment about subsidies cannot be continued for everything out there, or we're in a \$15.3-billion deficit—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. I don't find that's a point of order, but it's a point of information that the House might want to consider.

Further debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I do appreciate the opportunity to speak to this budget bill, especially since I realize that we are coming very close to the end of our debate time on it. Many of my colleagues have already raised some good points and reasons why this budget has failed the people of Ontario and has failed to put the province of Ontario back on track to economic productivity and prosperity. But I would like to discuss an additional feature of this budget that, in my view, is going to compound our province's profound financial troubles, and that is this budget's clear failure to assure international credit rating agencies that this government is committed to getting this province back on track. Following the budget, the Financial Post reported, "Ontario's ... budget has received lukewarm response from bond investors and credit rating agencies as they question whether the ... heavily indebted ... province can deliver on pledges...."

After seeing the Liberals' budget, another international credit rating agency, Moody's, which lowered Ontario's economic outlook to negative in December, said that a downgrade was "still a possibility" and that they are concerned about this province's economic growth.

Perhaps most concerning, however, is that there's little faith among credit rating agencies that Ontario's fortunes will improve. The best the province can hope for—the best, Mr. Speaker—is that it could maintain simply the status quo. Specifically, "Jennifer Wong, Moody's lead analyst for Ontario, said a shift to a 'stable' outlook could take at least a year or more to establish, while an upgrade to a 'positive' outlook remains unlikely."

In response to the budget, Ms. Wong has said, "The outlook is negative, so the pressure is on the downside. We've stated that it's unlikely the province would get upgraded, so it's whether there is further downward pressure or whether it stabilizes...."

"I don't see them going to a positive outlook any time soon. As to going back to stable ... we're assessing the ability to stabilize their debt burden over the medium term. So it's really about whether they can close their fiscal gap and whether they can stabilize the debt burden."

In other words, Mr. Speaker, not only is there a further downgrade still on the table, but more concerning is the

fact that an upgrade is not in the foreseeable future. The single most important factor for Moody's is assessing the province's ability to stabilize our debt burden. Clearly, they've looked at the McGuinty Liberals' decade-long spending spree, and they're not confident they have it in them to curb this spending.

Further, both the Canadian rating agency DBRS, Dominion Bond Rating Service, and Calgary's Bissett Investment Management stated that they're concerned because the budget is based on best-case scenarios rather than taking a more realistic view of future economic growth and their ability to rein in spending.

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In response to the budget, the Globe and Mail writes, "Investors and credit raters remain on edge. To achieve the budget's far-reaching goals, Mr. McGuinty will have to wrestle wage concessions from powerful unions." There is also more concern among rating agencies that the proposed budget savings are simply not sustainable over the long term.

Though the Liberals may take short-term steps to cut this budget, they're unable to continue those savings into the future.

Mario Angastiniotis, lead analyst for Ontario at Standard and Poor's, identified this concern, saying, "You're only getting \$2 billion savings in the first year with the most detail on that year, and then once you go in the outer years, your savings are increasingly moving beyond the political cycle"—in other words, past the next election.

Currently, all three credit rating agencies that comment on the budget—Moody's, Standard and Poor's and DBRS—have given Ontario a credit rating below the federal government's top rating. All of this comes after the McGuinty Liberals oversaw Ontario's credit rating being downgraded in 2009 by Standard and Poor's and DBRS.

All of these statistics are interesting, but I imagine some of the viewers out there might be wondering: Why is it important? Well, it's important because Ontario currently spends \$10 billion a year on payments for money borrowed, interest payments and service charges. That is \$10 billion a year, the third-largest expenditure in government behind health care and education. Imagine what that could do in terms of being able to build new hospitals, to be able to upgrade our education system, to be able to take care of vulnerable children, children with disabilities and adults with disabilities. It's a huge amount of money.

As my colleague the member from Durham said in his earlier talk on this subject, we have a situation right now where we have low interest rates. If our interest rates were to rise even by one percentage point, that could increase our payments by \$500 million a year. That's a huge amount. So we need to know and the people of Ontario need to know that, for all of the concessions that this government is making, especially with the announcements that have been made this afternoon about the deal that has been reached between the McGuinty Liberals



and the third party, all of this is going to cost money, which means that we're going to have to borrow more money, unless they're going to be really serious about reining in spending. Certainly, we haven't seen any indication today that they're prepared to do that.

It's clear from non-partisan, objective financial estimates that Ontario currently sits in pressing and precarious fiscal circumstances that require (a) a clear plan for debt reduction and (b) a clear plan for economic growth. That's the point at which we started. That's what we've been focused on since the election last year and that's what we've been talking about repeatedly in this House since then. We've been talking about what we need to do in order to rein in spending to be able to bring this province back into balance by 2017-18 and to create a clear plan for private sector job growth.

Some of the Liberal members have suggested that we dismissed this budget out of hand, without proper consultation or consideration of its provisions. But the fact of the matter is, we have been putting forward ideas based on these two priorities for the last six months or so—all of which have been consistently rejected by this government. What we've been talking about—and there have been meetings between the Premier and our leader, Tim Hudak, putting these things forward, talking about the principles that we believe are most important—and not only that; putting forward clearly articulated ways that we can achieve these priorities, things like, in terms of reining in spending, legislating a public sector wage freeze.

We believe that most Ontarians know that we're in very difficult economic circumstances right now. They know that everybody has to do their part. We believe that this is fair. If everyone is legislated to have a wage freeze, then you don't have to pick winners and losers. It's fair to everyone. Everyone knows what they can expect.

Well, that was initially rejected out of hand by this government, first of all on the basis that it was unconstitutional, but then I think, when they did their research, they found out that, in fact, there are ways that this can be achieved in situations where there are pressing fiscal circumstances and the overall objectives of the province in making sure that we can stay solvent are more important and that there is a way one can achieve that. Now what we have in the budget is a sort of, kind of, "We'll do it if we have to, but we're not really sure we have to." It isn't helping anybody. In the negotiations that are coming forward, I think it is with fair comment that some of the groups are saying there's not negotiating in good faith, because they're holding it in their back pocket and they're not really saying what they intend to do. We think that this is something that isn't satisfactory and that we should have a clearly articulated position from this government, but they haven't come forward with that yet.

We also have put forward that we could cut some of the expenses of government by ending some of the ridiculous subsidies that are being paid on some of the FIT and microFIT contracts for renewable energy, on the

basis that we simply can't afford it. It's not fair to either individuals in Ontario who are seeing their hydro bills skyrocket, nor is it good for businesses who currently exist in Ontario, who are finding it increasingly hard to keep up with the rapidly increasing hydro costs they're experiencing. But, moreover, I think it's fair to say that we are causing a lot of businesses that might otherwise consider investing in Ontario and setting up shop here to not do that because we can't assure them of either a reliable or affordable source of energy. We've talked about that; that has also been rejected.

Thirdly, we talked about fixing our arbitration system here in Ontario to make sure that the decisions that are rendered are more open and transparent, so we can understand the basis for the decisions, and that there is a significant consideration that's being paid to the ability to pay. It's all well and good to create settlements that satisfy everybody, make everybody happy, but if there's no ability to pay, they're not good for anybody.

Fourthly, we've talked about job creation. One way that we suggested it could be done is to change the apprenticeship system so that we could change the ratios and allow more young people to get into skilled trades; that could free up to 200,000 spaces for young people. I think every person in this House, as we went door to door in the last election, realized that we've got a significant problem with unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, and this could go a long way towards alleviating some of those problems.

Sadly, this budget doesn't achieve any of these priorities. With respect to the reduction in spending, this budget is a complete failure. In fact, it actually increases spending for the next year by almost \$2 billion. Then, the other proposed spending reductions are again pushed off past the next election cycle.

Clearly, the Liberal government is not really serious about reducing the spending, and I think that's reflected in the reluctance of the credit rating agencies to really believe them at this point. I really just don't think it's in their DNA to do it. I think that many people are concerned about that, including the credit rating agencies.

Also, with respect to private sector job creation, this budget is a dismal failure; it really doesn't address that. In fact, not only does it fail to create jobs here in the province of Ontario, but it is arguable that it's actually taking jobs out of this province. There are a couple of specific examples, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to point to.

First of all, one is in the horse racing industry. Now, we heard a lot of talk from this government about how they were going to cut costs and they were going to achieve the savings in the industry by ending what they called the "subsidy." In fact, of course, what it was was a revenue-sharing agreement that was brought about at the time that the slots were allowed into the horse racing venues. This is a significantly short-sighted decision because it's going to affect almost 60,000 jobs here in the province of Ontario—jobs that employ not just people in the racing industry but people who are in veterinary

services, farmers, other people involved with animal care and so on.

This is something that is also going to cause a lot of people who are going to have trouble finding jobs in the private sector—who will probably end up having to go on social assistance, perhaps even permanently.

Secondly, we've heard just in the last little bit about some of the concessions that have been made by this government in order to get the third party to vote with them in terms of the budget. Some of these concessions are going to cost a significant amount of money, Mr. Speaker, and one wonders where that money is going to come from.

Certainly, with some of the decisions that were made in the last few days, there was an announcement that was made on Friday about further cuts to the generic pharmaceutical industry. That is another industry that's going to be significantly impacted by this decision. They're not at all happy, and that may well result in jobs leaving the province of Ontario as well. There are some 8,000 good-paying jobs in the generic industry right now that could be further affected by the short-sighted decisions being made by this government.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, we're concerned about all of these things. We're concerned about the fact that this government refuses to listen to us, refuses to listen to us not only on the budget but also with respect to our request for a select committee so that we can get to the bottom of the Ornge scandal. So, for this reason, Mr. Speaker, I have no choice, really, than to call for adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Ms. Elliott has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1700 to 1730.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Will the members please take their seats.

Ms. Elliott has moved the adjournment of the debate. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while they are counted by the table staff.

Okay, take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will rise and be counted by the table staff.

Take your seats, please. Thank you.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 26; the nays are 37.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

Pursuant to standing order 58(d), there having been eight hours of debate, I am now required to put the question on the budget motion.

On March 27, 2012, Mr. Duncan moved, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** There are no points of order during a vote.

I beg to inform the House that I have received a deferral motion by the chief government whip. The vote will take place tomorrow at the time of deferred votes, after question period.

*Vote deferred.*

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. Delaney assumes ballot item number 75 and Ms. DiNovo assumes ballot item number 38.

Orders of the day.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Milloy has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1734.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craiton, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	Premier / Premier ministre
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC) <b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Northumberland–Quinte West Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB) <b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brook	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak  
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor  
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris  
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak  
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Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch











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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 24 April 2012

Mardi 24 avril 2012

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENT INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2012 LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION DES LOYERS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 17, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / *Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'd like to thank the members from our caucus, the member from Burlington as well as the member from Prince Edward-Hastings, for their thoughtful words on this particular bill a few days ago.

You know, while the comments from my colleagues opposite no doubt come from the same desire we all share to make Ontario a better place for families, I'm afraid we're doing the province a disservice by debating a piece of legislation that does so little at a time when families are facing cost-of-living increases directly related to this government's out-of-control spending. It should come as no surprise that I oppose this bill. The spirit behind it may be sound, but in practice, it falls short of the action needed to help Ontario families.

As I speak, there are families across the province waiting as long as three years for a place within an affordable housing unit. We have over half a million people out of work in Ontario; unemployment rates in this province have been beating the national average month after month for years on end now. Yet this bill sadly does nothing to address the fiscal crisis created by the members opposite. It does not respond to the hardship endured by Ontario families, who must wait in line for affordable options while their government does nothing to address one of

the root problems: the inability to keep up with the cost of living.

That brings me to my next point, Speaker, lest anyone accuse me of getting off topic. It's amazing to me that the minister would introduce such a bill that caps the rent increases landlords may enact without considering the costs that her own government has imposed on those same landlords and small business owners over their eight years at the steering wheel. As I say, this bill is admirable in spirit. It attempts, it seems, to control rent increases for tenants and claims to look after those tenants' well-being. Rent increases are an unpleasant fact of life, and I'm sure there are very few landlords who, having cultivated an open and friendly relationship with their tenants, enjoy having to raise rents. Yet revenues must keep pace with the cost of doing business. That's the economic model that Ontario operates on.

So what are some of the factors that increase the cost of doing business? Well, energy rates, certainly; taxes, most definitely; the costs absorbed by day-to-day necessities of running a rental property; landscaping; snow removal in our winter months; and basic maintenance to keep the buildings liveable for tenants and attractive for prospective customers.

Has the cost of energy gone up in Ontario? Yes, it has. Have there been more taxes laden on businesses and consumers? Yes, there have. Has the cost of basic services increased because of those tax hikes? Yes, they have.

My honourable colleague the member from Leeds-Grenville mentioned in this House on March 28 that the cost of operating rental units in Ontario is increasing 6% a year. Yet the minister, as we discussed, seeks to cap rental increases at 2.5% a year. That basically locks Ontario's small business landlords into a 3.5% shortfall, Speaker. It's as if the government is trying to lock our small businesses in the rental housing sector into the same tailspin our province is facing: more and more spending out the door than revenue being brought in. Our province currently spends tens of thousands of dollars each minute more than we take in. Perhaps the McGuinty government is tired of being the only ones in such an unstable predicament. I certainly hope that's not the case, but it seems that way.

So, again, this bill does not address the increased costs currently facing landlords in Ontario because of this government's tax hikes and energy rate increases. Let's just take one example, the HST. When this government brought in the HST, it increased the cost of those basic services like snow removal and lawn care. No landlord worth their salt would allow roadways or parking lots to



go unplowed or lawns to go untended. In fact, in most cases, they cannot, by law. So they pay. And because the cost of those services has risen, they pay more.

Now, I realize I may stand accused of being on the side of landlords and not on the side of Ontario families that can't pay the bills. I want to stress that I do not think the two are mutually exclusive, despite the short-sighted efforts of the bill that we are in fact debating. We must make life more affordable for Ontario families. That's the spirit behind this bill. That's admirable, to some degree. But truly long-lasting affordability and economic growth in Ontario must take both sides, the consumer and the provider, into account. This bill sadly is focused on one to the detriment of the other.

My caucus and I believe that there are solutions, however. Instead of slapping housing landlords with new taxes and new burdens to growth, let's get hydro rates under control. Let's continue to lower business taxes as planned, and let's not put our small businesses, landlords, into a position where they are forced to raise rents at a rapid pace just to keep up with this government's overspending.

Second, let's make life more affordable for Ontario families through sensible economic initiatives, instead of attempting to pass legislation that simply passes the buck to our small business owners.

Third and finally, Speaker, I think there is an elephant in the room that needs to be addressed. The minister and her government can attempt, if they like, to put a cap on rent rates in Ontario, to the detriment of hard-working, honest landlords and cover their ears when real measures for making life more affordable for families are proposed by our caucus. That's their right, I suppose, though ultimately a do-nothing budget and weak legislation accomplishes nothing for the people who sent us here.

Where they do a disservice to the constituents is when they allow \$700 million to walk out the door unaccounted for in an Ornge scandal that put the health care of our families at risk. They do a further disservice to our families when they attempt to block the repeated requests from this side of the House for a select committee that would expose the truth and get answers for taxpayers across the province. In my opinion, the continued debate of weak legislation, while important, is diminished in value in light of this government's refusal to go along with the will in the House in forming a select committee on Ornge. It's for that reason, Speaker, that I call for adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Mr. Nicholls has called adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 0910 to 0940.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I ask all members to take their seats.

Mr. Nicholls has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I'd ask all those in favour to stand and be counted by the Clerk.

I'd ask all those opposed to please rise and be counted.

I'd ask all members to take their seats.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 26; the nays are 41.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's amazing, when we have some great solutions, the things we'll do to ensure that the opposition is pretty much in full force to hear what some of our wonderful recommendations and solutions are. I thought I would say that just before they had the opportunity of getting up and leaving anyway.

You know, Speaker, it may interest the members opposite to learn that their government spends \$1.8 million more an hour, every hour, than the province actually brings in, in revenue. So with quick math we learned that in the time we just spent voting on the adjournment of the House so that we may get down to substantial issues facing the province, Ontario's economy has lost roughly \$900,000. Imagine what we could do for the families clamouring for affordable housing in Ontario with that money. It's a shame; it truly is.

Speaker, allow me to just quickly recap. We must make life more affordable for Ontario families. That's the spirit behind this bill, and it's admirable, to some degree. But truly long-lasting affordability and economic growth in Ontario must take both sides, the consumer and the provider, into account. Unfortunately, this bill is focused on one to the detriment of the other.

My caucus and I do believe that there are solutions, however. Instead of slapping landlords with new taxes and new burdens to growth, let's get hydro rates under control, let's continue to lower business taxes as planned, and let's not put our small business landlords in a position where they are forced to raise rents at a rapid pace just to keep up with this government's overspending.

Secondly, let's make life more affordable for Ontario families through sensible economic initiatives, instead of attempting to pass legislation that simply passes the buck on to our small business owners.

Thirdly and finally, I think there is an elephant in the room that needs to be addressed. The minister and her government can attempt, if they like, to put a cap on rent rates in Ontario, to the detriment of hard-working, honest landlords, and cover their ears when real measures for making life more affordable for families are proposed by our caucus.

So, Speaker, for these reasons, I cannot support this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I think the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex spoke very reasonably and compassionately, and I believe he could easily take John

Tory's job on the Live Drive on 1010. He's got that melodious voice, but it shines through. His tone is not just in the sound; it's in its meaning. He's very compassionate and empathetic toward the plight of seniors in Ontario, which is really what he was saying.

Yes, the reasonable part of Bill 19 is rather interesting, because the bill itself, I'd also like viewers to understand—that's the bill right there; there's nothing in it, actually. I don't know why we're spending all this time when we have the economy.

It's important to put on the record, for the Minister of the Environment here this morning, why he adjourned the debate. The reason is because we've been asking relentlessly—and you'll see in question period today—for a select committee dealing with the waste at Ornge, the millions of dollars, the scandalous—

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The Auditor General said it. Everyone has said it. All the officers of the Legislature are clear that there's a problem here. Public accounts is dealing with it. But we need a select committee that can subpoena people like Apps and Chris Mazza and the rest of them. That's why we've called this procedural wrangling: to draw the attention of the public to this important lack of democracy here. That's why the member was making that procedural change, and I support his procedure there, because the people of Ontario need to know that Premier McGuinty can't have a free ride here.

We have trouble in the economy, and this afternoon we'll be voting for a budget that just creates more debt. Who could argue with some of the important public services? No, we don't have a problem with that. But you can't keep spending more than you're earning for long. That's the disservice to the people of Ontario, and I support the comments the member made.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It's always a delight to listen to my good friend the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

I'd like to remind him that rent control legislation is a Progressive Conservative policy in the province of Ontario. After the 1975 election, there was a minority government. The NDP at that time, under the leadership of Stephen Lewis, campaigned extensively because rents were increasing here in Toronto by some 8%. When Mr. Davis presented his budget, he decided that he was going to be accommodating to the NDP. He brought in rent controls in the province of Ontario to deal with a problem that existed way back in 1975, and we've had variations on rent control legislation since 1975.

I know the member opposite. I would consider him to be a Progressive Conservative, with heavy emphasis on the progressive side of that ledger. I know that when he takes a look at this bill, he will see there are some provisions to help out landlords; for example, extraordinary increases in the cost of municipal taxes and charges or utilities, eligible capital expenditures and increases in operating costs related to security services. So there is a bit of a balance here to help landlords.

He should spend some time and emphasize his progressive roots on this particular piece of legislation. I know that when he takes the opportunity to kind of take a second look at this, he will perhaps be supportive. It will go to committee.

I'd also like to emphasize, Madam Speaker, that 46,000 new jobs were created in the province of Ontario in March, the greatest job increase of any province in Canada. It's good news, and it means there will be investment in housing stock in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Pembroke. Nipissing-Pembroke. Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Regardless of the name, I know how to get there, Speaker. Thank you very much.

It's a pleasure to comment on the address by my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex, another wonderful address by him. He's proving to be a very, very reasoned and valuable member of this caucus and this Parliament in short order.

But I did want to touch on something, Speaker. I won't use the time in a member's statement, but I did want to inform the House that at 4:39 this morning, our daughter Heidi gave birth to a baby girl, Lilli Elma Joan Couburn, a beautiful baby girl. I have a picture on my BlackBerry; it was taken only an hour or so after her birth. And one thing that struck me very clearly, Speaker, was that her eyes were wide open; she is clearly going to be a Conservative. There's no question about it. So we're very, very pleased. I'm very proud of that and I wanted to inform the House.

**0950**

But I did also want to talk about Bill 19 and what a fluff piece of legislation this is at a time when this province is in crisis and this government could have been engaged in so many more important things. Our caucus is concerned about, for example, the scandal that involves \$750 million of public taxpayers' money at the Ornge scandal. I know my colleague my friend from Vaughan was wondering what the bells were going on about, but he's not always the most engaged member, because, you know, sometimes I don't see him for a while.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask you to speak to the bill.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, of course—thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The reason that we have rung the bells is because they have refused—even when they promised to establish a select committee to study Ornge, they have refused to do so, and that's why we're ringing the bells, and then we deal with fluff pieces of legislation when this province is in a crisis. We need to do better in this House. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member from London-Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Today, we're talking about Bill 19, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, and I wanted to commend the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex for his thoughts on the bill.



We talked about affordable housing in this bill, and the intent of this bill is to try to make life a little more affordable for tenants by keeping the rent increases within the Canadian price index, between 1% and 2.5%. However, the affordability in the rent—when we talk about the cost of living today and what it takes to run a household, it just doesn't encompass rent.

We know today in Ontario that one in five or 20% of Ontario tenant households pays 50% or more of their household income on shelter. So if you can imagine, we talk about affordability. When I think of that, I think, of course, of your rent income but also your jobs. If you have a job, chances are, if it's a good job with benefits, the affordability of your housing is going to be less of a burden on you. That's part of the piece of what Ontarians are facing today; they don't have a good, permanent job with benefits, and they're concerned about how to afford their housing, how to afford to put their kids through school and how to put food on the table.

So though this bill tries to help, it's not enough. We propose that we take the HST off of home heating. That would have helped the affordability, along with the small part of this bill on the rent increases. So it's just not about the rent; it's about having Ontarians have a good-paying job so they can afford the rent, they can afford the heat, they can afford post-secondary education and make life better for them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member for Chatham-Kent-Essex has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the member from Durham, the members from Peterborough, from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and as well from London-Fanshawe. Thank you for your comments. I truly do appreciate all of them.

The member from Peterborough spoke actually very eloquently, but he spoke in the past, when things were different. This is 2012, where energy rates are rising. Unemployment is at an all-time high, and our province is in a severe crisis where we are in danger of having our credit rating lowered, and we know the impact that that will have on the total debt that our province is currently faced with.

My comment is simply, let's not punish small business owners for their desire to provide affordable housing to those who need it most. It's for those reasons, Speaker, that I must say that I cannot support this bill in its present state. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I am happy to rise today to speak to Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline. Bill 19 amends section 120 of the Residential Tenancies Act with regard to the annual rent increase guidelines. The bill further amends the Residential Tenancies Act.

Bill 19 is the result of the McGuinty government's HST, which added additional costs to several services that landlords require. Examples include snow removal

services, landscaping, many home improvement services and, in many cases, electricity costs and hydro. Landlords have to cover additional costs, and they are small business owners, Speaker, and cannot operate at a loss.

Ontario's economy is in bad shape, and when it comes to housing in the province of Ontario, whether you are a landlord or a tenant or a service provider, the situation is far from perfect. Everyone is facing serious challenges in this province. As we've reminded the government many times, for long over five years now Ontario's unemployment rate has been above the national average. The budget vote that's going to happen soon today doesn't do anything to help the people who are out of work, the almost 600,000 people who are out of work.

The PC Party believes that there needs to be action that results in Ontario becoming more affordable for people to live and operate a business in. Ontario needs to be the number one place in Canada to do business, to create jobs, and to live in and raise a family. Unfortunately, Speaker, the government here today doesn't have what it takes to make Ontario the number one destination.

Under the current government we have seen, in fact, the complete opposite. Life is getting more expensive by the day. The debt continues to grow along with the deficit, and Ontarians continue to suffer for Dalton McGuinty's mismanaged finances. Speaker, I've been on record numerous times saying that this is the most scandal-plagued government that this province has ever seen. We've seen the government spend billions—waste billions—of taxpayers' dollars to save seats in Mississauga and Oakville. We've seen a billion dollars wasted in the eHealth scandal. Let's not forget the millions of dollars to cricket clubs. We've seen the Ornge scandal. We've long called for a select committee on Ornge, and I will move adjournment of the debate here today until we get a select committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell. Thank you.

*The division bells rang from 0958 to 1015.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Members take their seats.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order. Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Those opposed, please stand.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 20; the nays are 41.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

It being past 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.  
The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'm honoured to introduce two guests today from my riding of Whitby-Oshawa: first, Mr. Jack Snedden, who is here with the Advocis group in the members' gallery; and also Ms. Tammy Rankin is here today, who is a winner of one of the Victim Services Awards. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I'd like to introduce my friend in the members' gallery: Rochelle Zabitsky.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to welcome representatives from Advocis to the Legislature today. They'll be meeting with several members of the Legislature, and we have a reception later. Specifically, I want to name Roger McMillan, who is in the members' gallery; and Mr. Mark Sampson and Paul Sabat, both of whom are from York region. Mr. Sampson is from the great riding of Newmarket-Aurora, and Mr. Sabat is from Richmond Hill. Welcome to Queen's Park. Good luck with your lobbying today.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** This week is national victims awareness week. Earlier today, I had the great pleasure of honouring a number of Ontarians who have shown exceptional commitment to helping victims of crime and their families, and I was joined by a number of members from all side of the House. These individuals have travelled from all across the province to be with us today.

So please help me in welcoming, from Gloucester, the Agoro family: Bashir, Abiola, Moji and Shola Agoro. From the Kingston area, we have Colleen Abeles and Manijeh Moghisi. From Thunder Bay, please welcome Sandra Brown; and from Bethany, Kelly Albin. From London, please welcome Dr. Mohammed Baobaid, and also Megan Walker and Sandra Halko, who are here representing the London abused women's shelter. From Whitby, we have Tammy Rankin. From here in Toronto, we have with us Mary Lou Fassel, as well as Karyn Kennedy and Barb McIntyre, who are here representing the Boost Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention program. From Thornhill, we have David Todd Morganstein. From Woodbridge, may I introduce Leanne Prendergast. And finally, representing the volunteers at the Sexual Assault Centre Hamilton Area, please welcome Shabeeh Ahmad and Lisa Boucher.

Congratulations to all of these individuals.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I am mindful of a few of the ovations, so I will be a little bit lenient, but the member has been identified already.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce John Spink, my executive assistant, and his daughter Samantha Mellerson, who is visiting us here from Baltimore, Maryland, in the members' gallery.

Also, welcome to Kelly Albin from Kawartha/Haliburton Victim Services, who received an award earlier today. She's accompanied by her father, Larry, and Laura Ostler, a long-time advocate for victim services.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise in the House today and introduce some guests from the Financial Advisors Association of Canada. With us today, in the east members' gallery, are Julian Wise from the Wise Advisory Group; Kim Sevcik from the Wise Advisory Group; John Cruise from Wise Riddell Financial Group; and finally, Jamie List from Bearing Capital Partners.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to welcome Alan Anderson of Advocis and a former financial adviser in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga; as well as Darren Sweeney, president of the Kitchener-Waterloo branch of Advocis and a financial adviser with Great-West Life. Thank you and welcome.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome to the Ontario Legislature today the family of page Constantine Tofas from the great riding of Scarborough-Guildwood. Today we have his parents, George and Angela Tofas; sister Stephanie Tofas; his aunt and uncle Patty and Sam Mandrozios; grandparents Peter and Voula Mandrozios; and Kosta and Helen Tofas. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'd like to introduce two young gentlemen from my riding, Kris Kisinger and Jeremy Spira, and all the members from Advocis who are also here from my riding, like Andrew Jones and others.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I'd like to introduce Marilyn and Murray Heintz from Burlington. They're here this morning. Marilyn was just recently nominated as Burlington Citizen of the Year.

*Applause.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that really wasn't for me.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of those travelling from the great city of Ottawa today to be here with us from Advocis. In particular, I'd like to recognize a good friend of mine, Kris Birchard. He's in the back here visiting from Ottawa.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I would like to welcome Nabila Warsi from the wonderful riding of Markham-Unionville. She is the mother of Safa Warsi, who is the co-captain of the pages today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to welcome the members of Advocis, and a special welcome to John Makela. John was also the very first Warton Willie handler. So without a shadow of a doubt, we welcome him to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'd like to welcome Ms. Sandra Brown, who received an award today from the Attorney General for the Victim Services Awards of Distinction, and her guests, Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin, Mrs. Aidan Brown and Mr. Colin Anthony-Ito. Thank you very much for being here today, and welcome to Queen's Park.



**Mrs. Julia Munro:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the chamber Al Jones, also from Advocis, but a resident of the York-Simcoe riding.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** If you look at the very top of the west gallery you'll see two very young faces. They are Genit Jeyakanthan, president of the Canadian Tamil Youth Alliance; and he's joined by another very young and active citizen in Ontario, Thivya Shanthakumar, who is the director of the Human Rights Advocacy Council, to get an impression of how our democracy works today.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome my friend Shannon Neely from Prince Edward-Hastings. He's president of Advocis in eastern Ontario.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I would like to welcome, from the riding of York South-Weston, Asquith Allen, VP provincial of York University Young Liberals; also Michelle Johnston, former president of U of T Liberals; and Kayla Lauzon, president of Brock University Young Liberals.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome two co-op students from my riding of Richmond Hill, Yosef Finkel and Elliot Yeboah, sitting in the public gallery.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I also wanted to welcome members of Advocis who are here today: Mr. Greg Pollock, who is the president and CEO of Advocis; Mr. Roger McMillan, chair of the Ontario provincial advocacy committee; Ms. Linda Gratton, vice-chair of the Ontario provincial advocacy committee; Mr. Kris Birchard, national chair of advocacy, also from Ottawa; David McGruer; Kirk Wrinn; and other members of Advocis Ottawa who are here today. The reception is tonight, from 5 to 7 p.m., in the legislative dining room.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'd like to welcome Mr. Mike Skube. He is here with Advocis as well today, from Thunder Bay.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** With us today from Advocis are members from my riding as well. I want to welcome them here.

I also want to welcome my personal guests here to the House from the great riding of Brant: Gerry and Nancy Smits, and Jamie and Suzie Forbes.

We welcome all of you here, and we welcome everyone here to the House today. Thank you very much.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Premier, I realize that you and your Liberal caucus acted yesterday as people very worried about the future of your careers, but on this side of the House, we are worried about the future of the province of Ontario. Your budget took a very weak response to a serious problem of taking us down the path of a \$30-billion deficit. Now you're digging the hole even deeper.

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Premier, I know you see yesterday as a win, because you fail to grasp the gravity of the crisis that's facing the province of Ontario. I see yesterday as a loss for our province, because the task ahead is so much more difficult now that he's increasing taxes and digging a deeper hole with more spending.

Sir, let me ask you directly: How many more hundreds of millions of dollars will we be forced to borrow for your compromise deal that ratchets up spending in our province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's nice to see the Leader of the Opposition back in the Legislature and off the campaign trail. You know, he's been AWOL—absent without leadership—over the last four years. He should have been here talking about how to make the budget better. Instead, he chose to be out nominating candidates. He chose to be ordering lawn signs.

We're proud of the fact that, not only does this agreement with the third party hold the line on expenditure, it reduces the deficit from what we projected.

That leader is not up to the job. He's been absent without leadership, he's disappointed his party, he's let Ontario down. He ought to be ashamed of his performance over the last—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Be seated, please. I will start by being very specific to members.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker, I want to say I'm disappointed that the Premier refused to answer the very first question on his climbdown; his increase in spending and his increase in taxes. His finance minister argues that they were forced to negotiate a deal because we refused to negotiate—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Peterborough, come to order.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** They say they were forced to take this deal because the PCs refused to negotiate. I say back, you've shown yourselves very capable of abandoning your principles without any of our help. It seems to come naturally.

Here's the problem: The credit rating agencies are watching very closely to see what kind of one-off deals, waiting for gimmicks, quick fixes, accounting tricks, a "fly by the seat of your pants" approach to fiscal management—we saw that yesterday with unspecified savings. You have not told us how much more this deal is going to cost us by digging the deficit hole even deeper. So I'll try again: Premier, can you tell us exactly how many more hundreds of millions of dollars we'll have to borrow for your climbdown yesterday?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Leader of the Opposition has had four weeks to sit down with the Premier and the leader of the third party, who worked all weekend to get

this arrangement. Where was the Leader of the Opposition? He was AWOL, absent without leadership.

It was not easy for the third party to come to terms with this. They worked hard. While you were out getting nominated, while you were out ordering lawn signs, while you were out abandoning the people of Ontario and abdicating your responsibility, the leader of the third party and the Premier of this province were working together to find an accord that keeps our expenses where they were.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be reporting more completely. We'll actually lower the deficit for this fiscal year. I'm looking forward to that debate.

You have been absent without leadership. You're not up to the job. You should have been at the table instead of—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

A quick reminder, everyone: When I get to the second warning and I gave a warning, there will be no second warning. I suspect there isn't anyone in this place who wants to get named.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'll try the Premier again, to respond to the deal, or as the finance minister called it, the "accord" he signed with the third party. Premier, you said very clearly over and over again that you had two basic principles; you drew two lines in the sand. You said that you would not increase taxes, and you said that you would not increase spending. Sir, you broke both of those promises. You're increasing taxes and you're increasing spending in the province of Ontario.

Just because the Premier is so willing to toss his principles overboard doesn't mean that we will. We will stand firmly for lowering spending, not increasing it; for creating the right environment for job creation in the province of Ontario. We want to see Ontario as a leader again in Canada, not falling further and further into the hole.

So, Premier, let me ask you a third time. You said that the NDP proposals would cost \$1 billion: Is that right? Is it more? Please tell us how much deeper the hole will be.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Not only has the Leader of the Opposition been AWOL, absent without leadership, now he's using the numbers completely inappropriately and not giving full—I want to respect the Chair. He's not being respectful of the facts here.

Don't take my word for it. Here's what the Guelph Mercury had to say: "Tim Hudak, the Tory leader with a one-word vocabulary—'No!'—will be left looking as foolish and irrelevant as he has since the election last October."

Here's what the National Post says: "Standing aside from all of this is PC leader Tim Hudak, who shunted himself out.... Some have suggested" that he "miscalculated by ceding the floor to the NDP leader...."

Not only did he miscalculate, he did not fulfill his responsibilities. He has been absent without leadership.

This is the right budget, the right plan that reduces the deficit, holds the line on spending and helps to get Ontario back to balance in the time frames outlined.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker, I'll say to the Premier, who is only a few feet in front of me here, that I would actually like an answer to the question. You said that this would cost \$1 billion. Is that accurate? Is it more or less?

More importantly, this gets to leadership. The Premier said he had two principles: One principle was that he wouldn't increase taxes; his other principle was that he would not increase spending. He drew a line in the sand and then he backed away from that line over and over again. And just because the Premier of the province of Ontario is so willing to compromise his principles at the drop of a hat, that doesn't mean we are. That doesn't mean the people of Ontario are. We'll stand firmly on our principles to do the right thing in our province.

Premier, let me ask you for the fourth time: Is it \$1 billion, more or less? How much deeper will the hole now be?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, to the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Leadership is about rolling up your sleeves, about working a minority Parliament, which the leader of the third party and the Premier have done, to arrive at an accord that holds the line on expenses and reduces the deficit.

But again, don't take my word for it. Let's hear what the St. Catharines Standard had to say—not exactly a bastion of liberalism, if there was one: "Tory boss Tim Hudak has already said no, unwisely taking himself and his party out of the ... equation."

You took yourself out of the equation. You did not offer ideas. You've been absent without leadership. Leadership is about working together in a minority Parliament. It's about making tough choices. It's about compromise. You were out getting nominated. You were out buying lawn signs. The Premier and the leader of the third party were working together—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to remind the member to focus on government policy.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm not looking for the heckling after I get attention and I move to the leader's question.

Leader.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Thank you, Speaker. With all due respect, leadership is standing up for what you believe in, and why you were sent here to Queen's Park: to fight each and every day for more jobs and for balancing the budget in our province. Leadership means not looking out for the day to day or saving their political skin. It means doing the right thing for the future of our province



of Ontario, making it strong again, making it prosperous again.

Premier, your entire budget is premised on achieving a voluntary pay freeze with the unions, which will require some tough negotiations. In the negotiations with the third party, you basically wrestled Ms. Horwath to the ceiling. You gave away the store. How can anybody believe you'll actually stand up in tough negotiations when you gave us a billion-dollar greater hole and a tax hike that's going to cost us jobs? How can you carry your plan when you caved so easily?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I think the first rule of leadership is, you have to show up. Leading is about standing up for what you believe in. We believe in full-day learning; they don't. They want to give generous subsidies to the horse racing industry. We believe in smaller class sizes; they don't. They want to cut corporate taxes more and more and more. We believe in strong government working together in a minority Parliament with open colleagues who are prepared to negotiate; they don't.

1050

They were out nominating candidates, they were out raising money, they were calling members of this Legislature names, and they're still doing it, Mr. Speaker. They've been absent without leadership.

This deal, I assure Ontarians again, will not only hold the line on expenses. It will reduce this year's deficit and allow us to build that future that all Ontarians want, one with the best health care and education in the world—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It seems the Premier is absent today, even though he's sitting in his chair and refusing to answer basic questions.

Premier, you refuse to tell us how much this deal is going to cost and refuse to tell us that if you're going to have to negotiate tough with the unions and hold back spending, why anybody would give you credibility now, after you wrestled the NDP to the ceiling and basically gave away the treasury. It's a billion dollars, a new tax increase.

You know what, Speaker? Leadership is about telling the truth. Leadership is about standing on your principles. Leadership is about fighting for a better, more prosperous future in the province of Ontario, and we will never apologize for doing what's right and looking to the long term: a strong, prosperous province that leads Canada in job creation, not the short-term gimmicks and giveaways that these guys are bringing forward—strong leadership for a strong province of Ontario under the PCs.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Leader of the Opposition missed the boat. Now he's on the dock waving frantically, Mr. Speaker. You know, you might even compare it to leading like a fish out of water. As recently as this weekend, he was at his nomination meeting instead of being with the leader of the third party and the Premier, dealing with the real problems that Ontario is confronted with. And again, don't take my word for it. Here's what

the Hamilton Spectator had to say: "Tory leader Tim Hudak is the odd man out. Despite winning more than twice as many seats as Horwath, he dealt himself out of the budget negotiations by rejecting it out of hand." Absent without leadership: You, sir, are not up to the job. Ontario deserves better from the Leader of the Opposition.

## JOB CREATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Speaker—  
*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

I understand what happened, but I would ask the member to be quick with the question and I ask for a less animated response from some members.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier this morning. Since the proposed budget was first tabled, we spoke with thousands of everyday Ontarians, and they told us very clearly that they didn't want an election but they weren't happy with the budget. So we made some progress and we put a little more fairness in that budget, and against the government's will, created some fiscal capacity. But people are still worried, Speaker, especially about jobs, and we're going to keep fighting for them. What is the Premier's plan on jobs, Speaker?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Well, Speaker, first of all let me take the opportunity—

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. I want the Sergeant-at-Arms to ask our protesters to leave.

We will take a 10-minute recess.

*The House recessed from 1055 to 1105.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Before we start the clock, I would just like to offer a reminder not only to all members but obviously to all of our guests: It is not the case and the tradition and the convention here that our visitors participate in any way, shape or form during the debate. That will be maintained. I thank you for your patience, and I appreciate the opportunity to remind everyone that outbursts will not be tolerated.

We are now on the—the leader of the third party.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh, yes, I'm sorry. Premier, you have the answer.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Thank you, Speaker. I want to thank my colleague for the question, but more than that, I want to take this opportunity for thanking her for the work that she did outside of the context of question period, which is understandably characterized by cut and thrust. It has a certain partisan overtone that's understandable and to be expected, Speaker, but there is good work to be done outside this chamber, I would suggest, by all three party leaders. I extend a continuing invitation to my honourable colleague the leader of the official opposition. There is still more work that we need to do on behalf of the people of Ontario, and we are always at our best when we work together.

Speaker, my honourable colleague knows that, among other things, the budget makes a specific commitment to 170,000 jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** There are 550,000 people in Ontario looking for work right now, and we won't find balance in this province if those people cannot find a job, Speaker. Would the Premier agree that the job creator tax credit, which would reward companies when they actually create jobs, is better than rewarding companies that ship jobs away?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, on the matter of the job creator tax credit, I have committed to my honourable colleague to have our new jobs and prosperity council give that very careful consideration so that we might consider it, as a government, with respect to the next budget.

There is some good news, Speaker, on the jobs front. Last month, Ontario created 42,000 new jobs. That's 56% of all the new jobs created in Canada. Since the depths of the recession, we've created over 350,000 jobs. That's more jobs created in Ontario than the other nine provinces combined. So I think we're moving in the right direction.

There is clearly more work to be done, but it's important to understand that an important part of the foundation for a job-creating jurisdiction is to eliminate the deficit, and that's why we're so absolutely committed to getting that done too.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the government has been forced to make this Liberal budget a little more fair for everyday Ontarians, but New Democrats know very well that this budget still falls very short for the people of this province. One of the things that's clear is that this province will not recover until everyday folks are back to work.

We proposed the job creator tax credit, which will reward the companies that create jobs. It's an alternative to the kinds of tax giveaways that the government has handed to companies that ship jobs away. The Premier has promised that our proposal will be considered by the jobs and prosperity council, and my question to the Premier is: When is that going to happen?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we are in the process of deciding who it is that should provide us with some leadership, but I can say that on the jobs and prosperity council we want representation from the business community, we want representation from the labour community and we want representation from academia and any other groups that might have something to offer in that regard.

1110

The fact of the matter is, the Ontario economy continues to evolve. I think it's very important that we develop a broad consensus, in business and labour in particular, as to where it is that we are going to apply our collective muscle. We have some \$2 billion that we

continue to invest in supporting business development and growth in Ontario. Are we using those monies in the best way possible? If we get more input on the part of labour in particular, I am convinced that we could do a better job together to grow this economy and create more jobs.

## JOB CREATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We all have to roll up our sleeves, get to work and work together to help those people who are still looking for work in this province. We've been very, very clear to the government that they need to do a little bit more, but on some key issues, they're still going in the wrong direction.

Does the Premier agree that forcing layoffs and destroying job-creating infrastructure when so many people are looking for work simply doesn't make sense?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I'll draw to my honourable colleague's attention once again the fact that, as part of our infrastructure plan, we're investing some \$35 billion over three years. That represents, annually, three times as much as they did under the previous PC government; every year, we'll be spending three times as much as they did, and we're doing it in a very challenging fiscal and economic environment.

We understand that that \$35 billion alone over the course of three years means 100,000 new jobs every year. When we build and repair our roads, that represents 26,000 jobs a year. The work that we will do in our schools—2,000 jobs; the work we will do in our colleges and universities—3,000 jobs; the continuing investments we make in our hospitals—26,000 jobs; and modernizing the OLG—6,000 jobs. Again, there are the jobs that will flow from our investments in the northern Ontario heritage fund and the eastern Ontario and the southwestern Ontario economic development funds.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, for the half a million people who are out of work, there's no time to delay on job creation. I have to say that the people who make this province work need to see a real plan to get those jobs created.

The Premier could get started today by moving on the job creator tax credit that the New Democrats support and we have asked them to consider. We want to see a rewarding of job creators in this province because we think that's the right way to go. We want to ensure that our natural resources in this province aren't shipped away to be processed somewhere else, bringing good jobs to northern Ontario.

These are items we put on the table many times. The government says that they're open to these new ideas. When can we expect some action?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think we certainly share the objective to strengthen this economy, to create as many jobs as we can and to process as much as we can by way of our raw materials here inside the province of Ontario. But I would argue that we have perhaps a more



comprehensive and a broader understanding of the global economy, our limits and our potential as a province.

I would also say that we've gone a long way to ensure that we have a much more competitive business environment. We have reduced corporate taxes, we have eliminated capital taxes, we reduced small business taxes, and we did something notwithstanding the opposition of my honourable colleague: We've adopted the HST, a very difficult measure, but it has decidedly made Ontario businesses more competitive.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'd ask the other side to give me a standing ovation after my next question. We'll see if that's going to happen.

This is what people are telling us. Jason from Cambridge writes, "The ... government [is] taking people's jobs away! And not making new ones! ... It's hard times for us working people!" Shane from Brantford says that he's worried about the budget. He worries that the budget "wipes out too many jobs and creates fewer jobs to replace those jobs that can't be replaced." What does the Premier have to say to people like Jason and Shane about a plan for job creation that works for everyone?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I would, through my honourable colleague, have her convey to those people that we've got a very strong budget. It takes strong action. It is suited to the times. It lays out a five-year plan for us to eliminate the deficit, which is absolutely essential to inspire confidence in our economy on the part of families, businesses and the international investment community. It protects health care and it protects education. By the way, it protects jobs in health care and it protects jobs in education, which I think is a very important message to send to our public sector partners, and it builds a new foundation for new jobs and new growth. That's exactly what this budget is all about, and I'm sure that my honourable colleague will want to convey that to those people who are contacting her.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is also for the Premier. The consistent thing about your government is a predisposition to making Ontarians pay for your broken promises, for your debt and for your uncontrollable spending, and your budget is proof of that. The budget your government presented was unacceptable to most Ontarians, and it was unacceptable to the majority of us here. You've made concessions at the 11th hour only to keep your government alive. But you have not solved any problem. In fact, you only deferred the jobs and debt crisis, and you've condemned Ontarians, right down to our grandchildren, to repayment.

Is this your idea of accountability and responsible management of our province's finances?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Accountability and transparency are important, and I would ask the member opposite

to deliver to his leader the message that he needs to be part of this, that we need to work together, instead of saying before reading the budget that you're voting against it. You need to show up. You need to participate. You need to stop the name-calling. You need to work together. I think that's what Ontarians expect.

This is not a giant talk radio studio, Mr. Speaker. This is an important place where public business is done. The Leader of the Opposition and the official opposition have been absent without leadership.

We're going to continue to work with all sides of the House to build a better Ontario for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I particularly find it interesting that the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Finance, uses this acronym, so I'll use one too—SNAFU: situation normal, always fiscally unsustainable.

Look, your government has simply done away with the concept of living within our means. In fact there is a real disconnect in your government between your spending and your ability to pay. Your budget certainly doesn't solve the problem.

Only last week, your government voted against a motion put forward by my colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills to systematically pay down the deficit. Instead, you decided to once again raise taxes. As usual, you're only too happy to shift the burden of your failures to Ontarians—their children and their grandchildren.

Some 82% of respondents to a CFRA Ottawa poll say Premier McGuinty is not a man of principle.

Is that your idea, Premier, of leadership?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, leadership involves laying out a balanced budget plan that has been accepted by most independent thinkers. It involves listening to other people when they have suggestions that will make things better.

It's not about talk radio and polls on radio stations. I've spoken to more than 100,000 people through my telephone town halls; my colleagues have had them all over Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the opportunity still exists for the official opposition to get back to work. Stop the nomination meetings. Quit ordering the lawn signs. Stop playing games. Quit the name-calling. Let's work together to build a better Ontario for all Ontarians.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. As we all know, the ONTC provides 950 jobs in northern Ontario. A lot of people think it's just a passenger train, but it's freight, telecommunications, a ferry service. It also has a railcar refurbishment division. The refurbishment division has got a proven track record. It's got skilled employees.

What I want to know and what those employees want to know is, will your ministry direct the interim board

that you have created to bid for contracts as they come up, or are you just planning to dump the company?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** First of all, I want to thank the NDP for supporting the budget motion. This allows us to work together as we divest the ONTC—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I also want to thank the member from Nipissing for his—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The member from Durham, come to order.

Minister.

1120

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I also want to thank the member for Nipissing, who has given his support to privatization of the ONTC. He's from North Bay, and he understands that the business line is good; the business model isn't. So as we work forward together with the two opposition parties in our divestment of the ONTC, we will ensure that we put in place a transportation system that is effective, efficient and will meet the present and future needs of northern Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Unfortunately, although we're trying to work together, the minister did not answer the question.

Via Rail has an outstanding contract for 98 cars and it can't be completed by the company that had the bid. The company is in trouble. They're looking for a new outfit to rebuild these cars.

My question is, can we work together to get those jobs into North Bay—that's the question—or are you only interested in dumping—your word is “divesting”; my word is “dumping.” Can we get those jobs in North Bay?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The third party refers to letters. I'd like to refer to a letter. This letter is from Mike from North Bay. He writes, “The NDP Was No Friend to Ontario Northland.” He goes on to say, “When in power, the Ontario New Democratic Party reduced bus service from Timmins to Chapleau and Wawa, docked the new ferry in Tobermory, cut norOntair service from 21 to six communities and sold off Star Transfer, the trucking firm of the ONTC.”

I look forward to working with the members in the third party to ensure that as this divestment takes place, we have in place in the future a very efficient, very effective, very modern transportation system that will meet the present and future needs of northern Ontario.

#### ONTARIO FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Ontario's screen-based industries are key economic drivers for our province. Film and television production contributes over \$2 billion annually to our economy, supports 23,000 jobs, and digital media adds almost \$1.5 billion and 16,000

jobs. In fact, they had their best-ever industry year in 2011. But in order for this sector to continue to grow, it needs to be able to provide jobs and to help our economy. We need significant investment from the province.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, what is the government going to do to support Ontario's film, television and digital industries to ensure that they remain stable and competitive?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the honourable member for asking this very important question.

Screen and television projects supported by the province contribute \$1.2 billion to our economy, a \$300-million increase over 2010. In 2011 alone, our government provided about \$290 million in tax credits to Ontario's screen-based industry through the Ontario film and television tax credit, the Ontario production services tax credit, the Ontario computer animation and special effects tax credit and the Ontario interactive digital media tax credit. We will continue to support the film and television sector, because this is a sector that will continue to create jobs and drive our knowledge-based economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Obviously we're all pleased to know that the government remains committed to creating additional sustainability and growth. By the year 2014 the global market for interactive digital media products and services is expecting an annual growth rate of 9.7% and \$500 billion. I think industry leaders would agree this is a fairly significant number.

With proper funding, Ontario will remain competitive in international markets and will excel as a world leader in film and television and digital media. Can the minister indicate what positive steps we are taking to enhance these areas, and perhaps share with us if there's any feedback from the industry itself?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you again for the question. Sarah Ker-Hornell, executive director and CEO of FilmOntario, recently said that Ontario's tax credits, combined with the breadth and depth of our infrastructure, talent, technology and expertise, have enabled the Ontario film industry to grow an additional 32% over 2010 and put us at the number one position in Canada.

Speaker, in addition, since 2003 we have invested almost \$1.6 billion in program and tax credit support to the screen-based industries. Under Ernie Eves, the PC government cut \$23 million from film-developing support. In contrast to that, our government will continue to move forward and make investments into our film, television and digital media sector.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. Last week, we had the pleasure of Mr. Alfred Apps's debut at the public accounts committee. The Premier, I'm sure, has been well briefed on the fact that the former president of the Liberal Party of Canada was not very complimentary to his government or to the Auditor General. He was



helpful, though, in that he confirmed for us that the Premier met with the now infamous Dr. Mazza and that there was a discussion during that meeting about Ornge and how well things were going there. Does the Premier recall that meeting with Dr. Mazza, and can he tell us today what the nature of that discussion was?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, as we spoke yesterday—

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The only thing worse than Ornge is that caucus.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Finance is not helping.

House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, as we spoke yesterday, as we've spoken numerous times in this Legislature, the public accounts committee is in the middle of hearings into the Ornge situation. The member referenced the testimony of Alfred Apps. Tomorrow, the committee will be sitting again. We'll be hearing from a long list of witnesses who have been agreed upon by all parties working together: Barry McLellan, a board member of Ornge; Tim Shortill, chief of staff, Ministry of Finance; Carole McKeogh, deputy director, legal services branch, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; and the list goes on.

Mr. Speaker, there's an opportunity for members on all sides of the House to pose questions to these witnesses and put together a report of their findings in terms of Ornge. I think it's time that the honourable member lets the committee do its work and look into a whole range of matters—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, how can the government House leader possibly know the answer to the question that I put to the Premier; namely, what was the nature of the discussion that you had with Dr. Mazza?

I presented to Mr. Apps a memo that he, Mr. Apps, wrote as direction to Dr. Mazza, his client at the time, prior to a meeting with the then health minister. In that memo, his direction to Dr. Mazza is as follows, "My advice: Downplay meeting with the Premier, perhaps not even mention it at all...." Well, Speaker, I wonder why he would get that direction from Mr. Apps, and I wonder if the Premier has had the same instructions to downplay his meeting with Dr. Mazza, which is why he's refusing to answer the question today.

I ask the Premier one more time, does he recall his meeting with Dr. Mazza, and can he tell us what was discussed at that meeting?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, if the honourable member wishes to conduct committee hearings here on the floor of the House, perhaps he can talk about the relationship between his party and Kelly Mitchell, who is

a top Hudak insider. He received \$400,000 specifically to lobby and schmooze PC MPPs for Ornge and its subsidiaries. Kelly Mitchell received lobbying contracts while serving as a board member at Ornge for its profits. He was the top fundraiser and close adviser for the PC leader's leadership campaign. Mitchell and his company donated over \$17,000 to the PC Party's 15 candidates and personally donated \$7,500. If the member insists upon holding committee hearings here on the floor of the House, we'd like to know a little bit more about Kelly Mitchell.

1130

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, can you tell people in northern Ontario why you think it's okay—and we agree there should be a subsidy to GO Transit—but you're not prepared to provide a similar subsidy to the Ontario Northland?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The reality is that we provide a subsidy to the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. We have for many, many, many years. The member from Timmins—James Bay knows that. It's now at a point that we can no longer subsidize the ONTC to the tune of in excess of \$100 million a year. We understand that the business line is good; the business model isn't. And so, in our divestment, we will look to put in place that type of model which will provide an effective, efficient transportation system that will meet the present and future needs of northern Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, I wish the Premier would answer the question because ultimately the decision is yours, Premier—and that is, we agree that we agree that GO Transit should get support from the provincial government. It is an essential part of the infrastructure transportation here in southern Ontario. We agree that we should do more in order to be able to support transit authorities across this province, in Hamilton, in Toronto, in Ottawa, in Sudbury and Timmins. But why is it that this government refuses to support an essential part of the infrastructure of northeastern Ontario with the Ontario Northland Commission?

So I ask again: Why is the government not prepared to give the vote of confidence to northeastern Ontario in the way that they have here in Toronto?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** First of all, I think the comparison is not a fair comparison. Let me tell you why. There are 57 million riders of GO Transit. There are 320,000 riders of the ONTC. That's not a fair comparison because if you break it down, the subsidy to GO Transit is less than the subsidy to the ONTC. We now subsidize riders to the tune of in excess of \$400 per ride. That's not sustainable. That cannot continue to be in place, and we are going to look at a model that is more effective, more

efficient, and will meet the present and future needs of northern Ontario.

### NON-PROFIT HOUSING

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I have a number of co-operatives in my riding of Ottawa Centre as well as the Co-operative Housing Association of Eastern Ontario.

Minister, I'm pleased to have fostered a good relationship with these residents and organizations, and they have consistently brought to my attention the challenge that co-op housing providers have faced with dispute resolution. The way co-operative housing is currently managed, co-op tenants and co-op housing providers cannot resolve their disputes through the Landlord and Tenant Board. Instead, to resolve such issues, they must go through the much more costly and time-consuming legal system.

As I'm sure the minister knows, these additional costs, sometimes as much as \$5,000 per dispute, can be quite a lot for co-operative housing providers to take on and adds to the already high demand on our courts.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell us what action our government is taking to ensure a fairer system is in place for other non-profit housing providers and remedy the problem?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank my colleague for his work with the co-op sector. Our government realizes the vital role that co-op housing providers play in providing affordable housing in the province. That's why I'm pleased to say that we've recently introduced the Non-profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act, 2012. What this act will do, if it's passed, is allow co-ops to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to resolve certain disputes, things like persistent late payment of rent, illegal behaviour and wilful damage. It will streamline the process and create a more cost-effective process for co-ops in three ways: It would save our co-op providers time and money; it would bring Ontario in line with other jurisdictions in Canada, such as Manitoba and Quebec; and it would relieve our courts from hearing approximately 300 co-op eviction cases per year, allowing them to devote those resources to other higher-demand needs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I know that co-op residents and stakeholders will be pleased to know that the government has heard their concerns and is taking action. Minister, as I mentioned in my question, the co-op sector has been active in highlighting this issue and others to members like myself and to the government. I've always been pleased with the constructive approach and good ideas they have brought to the table.

Would the minister tell us how the government has engaged the co-operative housing sector in preparation for these proposals, and what are their reactions about our proposed legislation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Actually, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has conducted substantial consultations with our co-op housing stakeholders. The co-operative housing federation—and it represents the vast majority of the 550 non-profit co-ops in Ontario and works with the government to ensure that the interests of co-ops in Ontario are protected—is completely supportive of the proposal. The Premier committed to them last year, actually, to move quickly in our government's mandate to reform the current co-op eviction process, and that's what we're doing.

I should also say that I'm happy to see the support that we've already received from the opposition parties on these proposed reforms, including a letter from the leader of the third party, who wrote a letter to the co-operative housing federation in September showing support for changes to the legislation. So, as the bill proceeds through the legislative process, I remain hopeful that we'll have unanimous support for this change to the co-op federation.

### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Your government likes to play the Ring of Fire card every chance you get. You played it in the throne speech a couple of years back. You played it in the last couple of budgets. You throw it out there every time someone challenges your tepid Grow North plan while you simultaneously gut key northern infrastructure.

Frankly, there's no substance to your plan and nothing to your Ring of Fire posturing. Years later, all you have to show for it is more high-priced help to coordinate a growing staff who are doing precious little to make the Ring of Fire a reality. Minister, when are you finally going to live up to all the bluster and get on with creating some prosperity and jobs, like Drummond recommend?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I've got to be perfectly honest, Speaker. When it comes to the Ring of Fire, we won't do what this party did; we won't be absent without leadership. Tim Hudak is away without leadership. The last thing Ontarians want is an unnecessary election. As we work towards realizing the potential of the Ring of Fire, we will work with anybody who is interested to ensure we maximize the potential that is the Ring of Fire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Minister, how long do you think you can keep stringing people along? It's beginning to look like no one in the McGuinty government knows what's going on—not MOI, MNR, NDM, MAA or EDT. Who exactly is coordinating this train wreck?

Last week, Perrin Beatty praised the federal government for tackling regulatory inefficiencies, and he specifically named the Ring of Fire. Meanwhile, your government can't make a decision on whether there will be a road, which direction it will go or who will own it. First Nations want to know, mining companies want to



know and miners want to know: What is happening with this most basic key piece of infrastructure—the road to the Ring of Fire?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The reality is, the road to the Ring of Fire is going to be filled with job opportunities for those in northern Ontario. It's going to be filled with job opportunities for those in the supply and services sector of the mining industry. It's going to be filled with jobs for those who are in the exploration and development business. It's going to be filled with jobs for those who are mining companies. The reality is, those consultations, those discussions, are ongoing. We are moving very, very positively and favourably, because we understand, as a government, that in order to ensure that we maximize the potential of the Ring of Fire, we have to do it in a very, very businesslike way and in a way that ensures that that potential is realized for everyone in northern Ontario, including—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. After three days of hearings at the public accounts committee and more than a dozen witnesses, this government's role in the Ornge fiasco is becoming increasingly clear. Here's how Alfred Apps puts it: "The government was thoroughly, painstakingly and, in all cases, truthfully briefed in advance of Ornge taking any of these actions. If the government had raised any objection to anything, I am confident that Ornge would not have proceeded."

Will the Premier admit today that his government is to blame for the fiasco at Ornge?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

1140

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, we have a parliamentary committee which is seized with the matter. In terms of the member's specific questions about government actions, the Minister of Health had an opportunity to go in front of the public accounts committee. My understanding is, she stayed for two and a half hours—although only requested for an hour—with senior officials, where she outlined the measures that she took when she learned about the inappropriate activities that were taking place at Ornge—the activities that she took in terms of replacing the board, in terms of the new CEO, in terms of, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, having to call in the OPP because of suspicions that came out. The committee is seized with this matter, the committee is continuing its work on it, and I think we should allow the committee to do its work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Back to the Premier: Mr. Apps went on to say that Ornge "wanted to brief the government, wanted to brief it broadly—finance, health, economic development and trade, the Ontario Financing

Authority. We obviously left it to the government to decide who" attended "those briefings."

As we heard from representatives of these ministries, it became clear that your government knew of the bizarre corporate structure; your government knew of the high salaries; they knew of the relationship between Ornge and the Liberal Party, yet we are to believe that those who could take action were never informed. How much longer will the Premier and the health minister tell this House that they knew nothing until December 2011?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, the Minister of Health gave a very lengthy explanation of the decisive action that she took, the action that was taken on the part of the government.

In terms of this question, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition seems to go over and over again as to when people were briefed or informed: Again I'll remind the honourable member of correspondence that was received by her party in 2010 outlining many of the issues at Ornge which she now finds disturbing. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we learn about the official opposition and the contacts that they had at Ornge in terms of written briefings and, of course, through this individual Kelly Mitchell, who was paid some \$400,000 expressly to schmooze and lobby the members of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, if members want to hold committee hearings here on the floor of the House during question period, they have a lot of answers to provide about their conduct over the last several years.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, it's the responsibility of government to protect our communities, our families and, most importantly, our children. Ontarians worry when they hear about shootings in the news media. Torontonians and Ontarians have a right to feel safe when out on a family outing in the community, taking their kids to school or parents to a doctor's appointment. Minister, what are you doing to deal with gun violence in Toronto?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, let me say thank you to the member for Willowdale for this important question. I want to assure your community that safety is of paramount importance to this government. That is why we have invested more than \$100 million in three initiatives geared toward combatting gun violence, including the guns and gangs task force. In 2006, we worked closely with Toronto Police Chief Blair to establish the Toronto anti-violence intervention strategy. Since 2006, under TAVIS, the Toronto Police Service has led over 19,000 arrests and the seizure of more than 1,200 firearms. Plus, last year, Toronto recorded its lowest murder rate in 25 years. Mr. Speaker, TAVIS is working.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Minister, that's not the only thing that I'm concerned about. My constituents in

Willowdale often ask me: On a proactive basis, what are we doing to prevent crime, to prevent future gun violence? Making arrests and seizing weapons is one way to fight crime, but as we all know in this House, prevention is a powerful tool as well.

Minister, what preventive measures are you taking to protect Ontarians and Torontonians from gun violence and other crime?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Crime prevention is a very important component in the fight against crime. We've invested \$5.2 million in the Safer and Vital Communities Grant program, which is aimed at preventing and reducing crime. For the fourth year in a row, we've doubled the RIDE grant program funding to \$2.4 million across the province.

This is much different from the previous government and its federal cousin. The federal government claims to be tough on crime, only to download costs on the province. The previous provincial Conservative government fired 500 police officers across the province.

Our government is committed to protecting Ontarians, and it shows. In December, Maclean's magazine reported that Ontario is the safest province in Canada.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. Yesterday, Minister, I asked what you're doing to protect consumers from being gouged at the pump. You actually said a lot, but I was shocked that at no time did you even mention the word "gasoline." I've never heard, in my time here, a more out-of-touch answer.

But Minister, I'm a good sport, so I'm going to give you another chance. Maybe your staff have provided you with some better talking points, or maybe, just maybe, you've actually visited a gas station in Ontario. So Minister, I'm going to ask you: Can you tell me the average price per litre of gasoline in the province this morning?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I'm certain that the member opposite knows that that is an issue which falls under the federal jurisdiction. Also, I am certain that—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** This is a great opportunity for me to talk about consumer protection and the commitment of our government to consumer protection in the province.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, our government is a strong ally of consumers, and we have a great track record on consumer protection. We have improved consumer protection—when they buy cars, make funeral arrangements, book trips etc. We have placed caps on the cost of borrowing for payday loan agreements. And in 2012, Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Minister, I know one thing for sure: None of your Liberal colleagues passed over for cabinet are going to use any of your answers to prove what your government's doing for gas prices. Yesterday, you talked about cellphones, vacations, funerals and purchasing a car. At no time did you talk about gasoline. Okay, you did; you blamed the feds. You can't have a McGuinity minister without making sure they do that somewhere in their answer.

Well, Minister, as I told you yesterday, the federal Competition Bureau is doing something: They're charging retailers. Why is it that all you have done is to then add new taxes to increase the pain at the pumps for Ontario families?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** It is certainly an apropos time for me to talk about the strong actions that we are taking, Mr. Speaker, as the Ontario government with our proposed legislation to help eliminate the cell shock that many consumers get from opening wireless service bills for their cellphones, smart phones and other similar mobile devices. Under our proposed legislation, if passed, Ontarians will benefit in a number of ways, Mr. Speaker, including that contracts will be written in plain language, contracts will spell out which services come with basic fees and which would result in a higher bill, and that providers would need express consent before they renew, extend or amend a fixed-term contract, with a cap on the cost of cancelling a contract. And we will require—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### JOB CREATION

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Families in northwestern Ontario want jobs and they've looked to this government to help bring those jobs. One of the few times of optimism was in 2009, when this government announced the creation of 100 jobs at the Aspenware plant in Dryden. Last week I received an invitation to the grand opening of the new Aspenware Generation Two plant in Vernon, BC. Will the government explain to this House and the people of Dryden why those promised jobs are in another province?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I appreciate the question. I think, as the member would also know if she was speaking to the Aspenware people, that they are indeed in conversations with our government and with our ministry about future opportunities. She will also know that a decision was made very specifically to make sure that the operation was commercially viable before they continued their discussions with us.

The fact is, we have so many pieces of actually very positive news related to the forestry sector in terms of the incentives that our government has provided to a number of industries, certainly when one looks at the opportunities that are happening at Resolute Forest Products, in



terms of the commitments they've made to expand their operation in Thunder Bay, to expand the sawmill, the work that they're doing in Iroquois Falls and other places as well. Our government continues to support them in terms of a northern electricity rebate plan. The fact is, we are excited about those opportunities. Those discussions continue, and I look forward to them happening in the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Dryden has been hit hard with the loss of 800 forestry jobs since 2004. The city of Dryden has invested millions of dollars in building an industrial park to house this Aspenware facility because they took this government at its word. The industrial park is done, but the primary tenant is setting up shop in Vernon, British Columbia, because this government could not deliver on loan guarantees and wood supply.

We know this government is supporting jobs in Tennessee, but what is it doing for the people who actually reside in Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I think the member is being disingenuous. If she has had—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** No, if she has had conversations with the Aspenware people, she will understand that indeed we are in discussions with Aspenware and have been for some time.

Indeed, may I say, when one looks at the northern Ontario heritage fund and the amount of support that has gone, including, may I say, to the industrial park that you reference in Dryden, the member also knows—we were together in fact when there was a very significant announcement made related to the Centre for Research and Innovation, the bio-economy, between Domtar and a major US research firm in terms of finding new value-added opportunities for the forestry sector.

So the opportunities are there. We're continuing to look towards the future. We're in discussions—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Before I continue, I did finally click in and I would ask the member to withdraw his comment earlier in his answer.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Withdrawn, Speaker.

## VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Today with us in the west members' gallery is a personal friend and the former MPP for Brantford in the 32nd and 33rd Parliaments, Mr. Phil Gillies. Welcome.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### 2012 ONTARIO BUDGET

Deferred vote on the motion by Mr. Duncan, seconded by Mr. McGuinty, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have a deferred vote on the budget motion.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1153 to 1158.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Will the members take their seats, please?

All those in favour will rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine
Balkissoon, Bas	Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	Moridi, Reza
Bentley, Christopher	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Piruzza, Teresa
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sorbara, Greg
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crack, Grant	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Craiton, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Damerla, Dipika	McGuinty, Dalton	Zimmer, David
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise.

### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLaren, Jack	Shurman, Peter
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Harris, Michael	Milligan, Rob E.	Yakubski, John
Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick	
Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 52; the nays are 37.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1202 to 1500.*

## ESTIMATES

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, I have a message from the Honourable David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by his own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2013, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly—Toronto, April 23, 2012.

## WEARING OF RIBBONS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Peterborough on a point of order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order: I'd ask unanimous consent for members in the Legislature to wear the purple ribbon in recognition of World Meningitis Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Unanimous consent has been sought for wearing the ribbon. Do we agree? Agreed.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'm very pleased to introduce three financial professionals from Peterborough in the members' west gallery: Judy Ruttle, Linda Gratton and Nick Devere-Bennett, who are members of Advocis, Peterborough. I'm very proud of their work in the riding of Peterborough. Every year, they sponsor a fundraiser for the Peterborough Regional Health Care Centre to raise necessary dollars for a number of activities at PRHC, and we want to welcome them here this afternoon.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to welcome John Willoughby, a constituent who's an associate of the financial advisers, and welcome the Advocis group here today to educate us on financial planning.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It's my pleasure to introduce, in the east members' gallery, Vahan Ajamian and Mark Atikian, members of the Armenian National Committee of Toronto.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'd like to introduce Andrew Johnson, one of my constituents, and a member of the Advocis group, sitting in the members' east gallery.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I rise today to mark the 97th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Beginning on April 24, 1915, the Armenian people were subjected to widespread suffering and loss of life at the hands of the Ottoman Empire.

In recent years, the Canadian government officially recognized this tragedy, first in the Senate and then in the House of Commons, where members passed a motion that acknowledged the Armenian genocide of 1915 and condemned it as a crime against humanity.

I applaud the Armenian community's efforts to acknowledge their past while working with other Canadians to build a future based on mutual respect. I invite all Canadians to remember the Armenian genocide as we work together to prevent terrible tragedies like this from ever happening again.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I rise today to talk about the Toronto District School Board. Like boards right across this entire province, they are facing a very bleak future in terms of their students. Eight long years ago, this government promised to review the funding formula. Eight years later, nothing at all has happened in terms of that funding formula.

Now the school boards across the province, and particularly the Toronto District School Board, are being forced to make gut-wrenching decisions. Instead of this government doing something positive like eliminating a needless EQAO, they are making the boards do some dirty work. The boards are being required, in my riding, to make the very tough choice of closing schools, changing the grades and programs, changing the school boundaries and inconveniencing families, and possibly busing.

The Toronto District School Board has set up an accommodation review. They are having four open houses in my riding: one at Victoria Park school on April 30, one on May 1 at Selwyn school, one on May 2 at Gordon A. Brown school, and one on May 9 at O'Connor Drive school, all between 6:30 and 8:30.

I am asking the members of the community to please come out—the parents and members of the community—to make their views known. It is really quite unfortunate what is happening in inner-city schools in Toronto and, in fact, in schools all across the province because the funding formula doesn't work anymore.

## ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Today is a very significant anniversary for many in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham as well as across Ontario. Today we reflect on the horrific time endured by over two million Armenians between 1915 and 1917.

Ninety-seven years ago today, Armenian civic leaders, intellectuals, doctors, businessmen and artists began to be rounded up and killed. Women and children were loaded onto trains headed for the Syrian Desert or led on forced marches into isolated and deserted lands. Embarking with little food and few supplies, women and children had little hope of survival.



Fifty Armenian orphans from the genocide, later known as the Georgetown Boys, arrived in Canada on June 30, 1923, through government support and the donations of ordinary Canadians. It was a unique event in Canadian history, an event commonly referred to as Canada's noble experiment, as it was Canada's first humanitarian act on an international scale.

I was grateful to be invited by Mark Atikian, a constituent of mine, through the Armenian National Committee of Toronto, to join Armenian Canadians once again this past Sunday in commemorating the tragedy of the genocide at the Armenian Community Centre in North York. It was a moving and sobering service as we thought of man's inhumanity to man. Let's keep all our friends of Armenian heritage in our thoughts today.

### HOCKEY

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I rise in the House today to congratulate and recognize the Owen Sound Jr. Attack Crescent Midgets, who are the 2012 Ontario Hockey Federation champions. The Junior Attack Crescents clinched the title with a convincing 6-1 victory over the London Bandits in the championship game in London on April 16.

The provincial title was celebrated with a parade of fire trucks in Owen Sound. I know, I won the all-Ontario junior fastball championship and had a similar ride, and it's a memory that stays with you for a lifetime. Head coach Trevor Cunningham, along with assistant coach Scott Amyot, trainer Carl Linthorne, and manager Rhonda Vander Ploeg, did a great job preparing the team for a challenging season and a great playoff run.

As the Crescents' motto says, "Each player gives 110% every time they step on the ice, whether it be at practice or a game." I would suggest this approach obviously paid off handsomely.

The dedicated players are captain Tyler Cunningham, assistants Brandon Eagles and Nate Kramer, Jerred Kiss, Skylar Leblanc, Kyle Linthorne, Adam Roy, Ryan Hamelin, Tyler McCracken, Josh Bumstead, Dylan Carder, Tanner Bastien, Chris Baker, John Morris, Lauchlin Elder, David Vander Ploeg, Nick Bruce and Brandon Vanderschot.

The Junior Attack defeated the Schumacher Cubs in the semi-final 7-3 to advance to the championship. The work and dedication displayed by these fantastic players deserves recognition. I'm very proud of our team and I'd like all members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating the Owen Sound Jr. Attack Crescent Midgets on a fantastic win and a great year, and wish them the best next season.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I rise today to speak to the mixed emotions of hope and despair that I feel in this Legislature this afternoon. Despite the incredible work of our leader and our team here, this morning a Liberal budget

passed that will hurt vulnerable Ontarians. Countless Ontarians will go to bed tonight worried and hungry. Despite our best efforts, child care spaces are at risk and will close. Jobs will be lost. Transit services in the north are in jeopardy. Health care services and educational supports across this province are at risk.

I despair because when people came to Queen's Park, they came to say, "Put food in the budget," and they meant every day of the year. Instead, people on Ontario Works will barely be able to eat one more meal a month.

But I'm hopeful that things are going in the right path, that we're getting stronger, that our movement is getting stronger, that workers and students are mobilizing and organizing and that I can count on my home team in Davenport, who are brilliant. Our staff is brilliant, our volunteers are incredible, and they always have my back. I'm hopeful that our incredible team here at Queen's Park, under the steady and compassionate leadership of Andrea, has forced real concessions from this government that will really make this budget fair and, in concrete ways, will help people. They've won millions of dollars for public services. I'm hopeful that one day soon, we will be strong enough to introduce an NDP budget in Ontario that will be fair and equitable and that we can be entirely proud of.

### VICTIM SERVICES AWARD OF DISTINCTION

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I rise today to formally congratulate the Agoro family, from Blackburn hamlet in my riding, for being among this year's recipients of the Victim Services Awards of Distinction. Bashir and Abiola Agoro are in the gallery today and I thank them for coming to Queen's Park.

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In June 2002, 18-year-old Dapo Agoro was at a dance club with a group of friends when he was stabbed to death while trying to break up a fight. His sudden and tragic death had a devastating impact on his mother, Abiola, father, Bashir, and sisters Moji and Shola, but rather than succumb to the darkness that accompanies any tragedy of this type, the Agoro family decided to turn their tragic loss into a triumph of the human spirit.

In 2005, they created the Dapo Agoro Foundation for Peace in honour of his memory. The foundation seeks to promote non-violent conflict resolution through a variety of initiatives, including the Dapo Agoro Peace Award, which is presented every year to a student in his former high school who best demonstrates the traits of leadership, tolerance and the pursuit of non-violent conflict resolution.

This June will mark the 10th anniversary of Dapo's passing, and the Agoro family plans to mark the occasion by gaining official non-profit status for the foundation. This will allow the organization to increase their fundraising efforts and expand their programs.

The Agoro family has been through a lot. They continue to stay committed to their faith and each other.

Their mission to promote non-violent conflict resolution among youth is a fitting tribute to the memory of their son and brother.

Once again, I would like to extend my congratulations to the Agoro family for receiving this year's Victim Services Award of Distinction and wish them continued success in their mission to promote non-violent conflict resolution among our youth.

#### AGAPE CENTRE

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Our province is a great place to live in, and we know we can count on our community and support networks when we need them. In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, a key member of such a network is the Agape Centre. For many years, they have been operating a food bank, a soup kitchen and a thrift shop.

Ontario is facing some challenging times. Unemployment has been above the Canadian average for more than five years and food bank users are on the rise. Pressures beyond unemployment, such as wages rising slower than inflation, rising energy costs and taxes, are keeping people in need.

This summer the Fountaingate Christian Assembly is generously donating the use of a three-acre garden for the production of fresh fruit and vegetables. I am pleased to know that the residents of my riding who require the use of a food bank will not just get more, but healthier food this summer.

The Agape Centre is funded by residents who donate items to the thrift shop, food for the food bank and soup kitchen, and generous financial donations. The food bank is almost at capacity and they will need to raise even more funds to afford a part-time garden attendant. I wish them all the success that they fully deserve in their fund-raising efforts.

Mr. Speaker, Agape provides a valuable service to Cornwall and surrounding areas. I commend them for their hard work and dedication and I commend the Fountaingate Christian Assembly for their generous donations.

#### ADVOCIS

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm pleased to welcome to the Legislature, for its seventh annual Queen's Park day, Advocis, the Financial Advisors Association of Canada. Advocis is the largest voluntary professional membership association of financial advisers in Canada. For more than 100 years, Advocis members have provided financial services to Ontarians, delivering financial security and peace of mind to families and individuals in every part of our province. Its 5,000 members across Ontario not only offer advice but are licensed to distribute life and health insurance, mutual funds and other securities regulated by the Ontario government.

Professional financial advisers and planners are critical to the economy, helping consumers make sound and

informed financial and investment decisions that ultimately lead to greater financial stability and independence. As an association, Advocis works with decision-makers and the public to demonstrate the value of qualified financial advice and to strive for an environment in which all Canadians have access to the advice they need.

With members in nearly every community, Speaker, Advocis is uniquely placed to partner with MPPs, government and community leaders on issues related to financial services and advice. Once again, it is my privilege to welcome Advocis to the Ontario Legislature today, and I invite all members to join them for a reception this evening at 5 o'clock in the legislative dining room. Thank you, Speaker, and welcome to Advocis members.

#### COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to rise to give a cheer to two communities in my riding of Durham who were recently awarded funding from Molson Coors. The Molson Coors Community Cheer program awards funding to local projects, with a focus on building active and social communities across Canada. Hundreds of communities apply from across Canada, and I am proud to say that two of the 21 members just announced recently are from my riding of Durham.

I'm pleased to congratulate the communities of Greenbank in Scugog township and Bowmanville in Clarington.

First, congratulations to the Greenbank Hall and Park Board committee, who received \$15,000 to replace and upgrade aging park bleachers at the local baseball diamond. Second, congratulations to Bowmanville, receiving \$25,000 from Molson's. It was the final step of a \$450,000 campaign for a new fish bypass channel, a trail extension and an outdoor education area in the Bowmanville Creek Valley lands.

I'd like to thank and congratulate the young volunteers, Steve Kay and Erin O'Toole, who co-chaired the "A River Runs Through Us" dinner, where they raised \$85,000 and had General Rick Hillier as guest speaker.

Congratulations to the dinner committee, all young people from high school in their past: Kevin Anyan, Tori Kay, Jennifer Knox, Amy Logan Holmes and Tyler Smith.

Congratulations also to Frank Lockhart, who is president of Valleys 2000, and to the co-chairs and fundraiser chairs, Harold Hammond and Al Strike.

This has truly been a community event. I'd like to congratulate old and young working together to make our community better and thank Community Cheer; that's the Molson Coors Community Cheer program.



## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has received the report on intended appointments dated April 24, 2012, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

### MEMBER'S PRIVILEGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Yesterday, I made reference to hearing a point of privilege from the member from Burlington. I am prepared to hear that point of privilege today. The member from Burlington.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I rise on a point of personal privilege. I provided you with the appropriate notice, and I will proceed—can I proceed?

In accordance with standing order 21(c), I would like to bring your attention to a point of privilege. Since Monday, April 16, robocalls have been placed to my riding. As a result, my office has been inundated with over 1,500 phone calls to my office.

I raise this issue with you not only because it involves a breach of my privileges, but rather because this point of privilege is about the need to preserve the privileges of all members. I feel for this reason that this is a matter worthy of serious consideration.

First, I will provide you with a brief background of the issue at hand and will then discuss a parliamentary precedent that supports me.

On April 16, 2012, I was notified that robocalls were being sent to my constituents by the Ontario Liberal Party. Callers were informed that I was being told to vote against the budget. They were told that a vote against the budget would force a needless election, and they were told that a vote against the budget would put funding for Joseph Brant Hospital in jeopardy.

I have forwarded to you a copy of the script that appeared in the Thursday, April 19, 2012, edition of the *Hamilton Spectator*.

In the course of the recording, my constituents were instructed to press 3 on their keypad to be directed to my office.

I recognize and do not dispute that I must serve my constituents and address any concerns that may come up regarding my riding. However, the issue at hand is that due to the inaccurate and fearmongering statements that are being sent to constituents, I have now had to focus on the 1,500 phone calls. As a result, my privileges as a member of this Legislature have been infringed, and I have not been able to perform all of my duties as MPP.

One duty that an MPP is required to do is to provide assistance to constituents on any provincial matter, which

I will refer to as “casework” throughout the rest of my submission.

Casework consists of assisting people with issues that they may be having with ODSP, welfare or something as simple as helping them with a driver's licence or health card replacement.

However, due to these calls, my voicemail was regularly at capacity, which has provided constituents with difficulty in reaching their member for assistance. In addition, these phone calls have tied up my phone lines throughout business hours, impacting those who use their services most: ODSP recipients, seniors, welfare recipients and those seeking unemployment help.

1520

This campaign has severed my connections with those residents, which severely limits my ability to serve Burlingtonians. Not only have these robocalls tied up my phone lines, but they have prevented me from following up with ministry officials and from working on pre-existing casework.

It concerns me greatly that partisan robocalls are tying up non-partisan resources and ultimately preventing me from representing my constituents to my greatest ability. Legislative phone numbers should not be used in partisan campaigns.

The most cited definition of parliamentary privilege can be found in the 23rd edition of *Erskine May*, which defines parliamentary privilege as “the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively ... and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions....”

Furthermore, O'Brien and Bosc break down the peculiar rights as the rights members share collectively and the rights each individual member has. In particular, I draw your attention to a member's right to be free from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation. Because these calls get redirected to my office, they obstruct and interfere with part of my parliamentary duties and thus constitute a *prima facie* breach of privilege.

O'Brien and Bosc also state that “the unjust damaging of a member's good name might be seen as constituting an obstruction if the member is prevented from performing his or her parliamentary functions.”

They illustrate this using a ruling from former House of Commons Speaker the Honourable John Fraser. In his 1987 ruling, Speaker Fraser stated that “the privileges of a member are violated by any action which might impede him or her in the fulfilment of his or her duties and functions. It is obvious that the unjust damaging of a reputation could constitute such an impediment.”

I pride myself on representing my constituents and being able to help them when they need assistance. As a result of the robocalls tying up my office phone lines, I have received numerous complaints regarding the service that I provide, which ultimately has damaged my reputation as an accessible MPP. It troubles me that due to these robocalls, some of my constituents feel that I am

inaccessible as an MPP. This is not a reputation that any MPP on any side of the Legislature would want to have.

Lastly, O'Brien and Bosc quote a May 6, 1985, ruling from former Speaker of the House of Commons the Honourable John Bosley, which is very pertinent to this case. The ruling states: "Any action which impedes or tends to impede a member in the discharge of his duties is a breach of privilege."

I am certain that the government will provide you with the ruling from Speaker Jeanne Sauvé, which stated, "While I am only too aware of the multiple responsibilities, duties, and also the work the member has to do relating to his constituency, as Speaker I am required to consider only those matters which affect the member's parliamentary work."

However, I will suggest to you that getting information for our constituents from ministers and ministries and assisting our constituents relating to problems with Ontario's programs is a significant part of our parliamentary work, and is very much of our parliamentary work. Casework does not only occur when we are in our ridings. Many times we are required to do it while at the Legislature and at Queen's Park. If you rule that casework is not a part of our parliamentary privileges, you would be saying that casework is only a courtesy to our constituents, as opposed to being one of our duties as provincial parliamentarians.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, MPPs' functions are not limited to the Legislature. It is imperative that we remember that our role as a parliamentarian is not limited to the Legislature, and that we are required to assist our constituents' needs. This is why I urge you to look into this issue.

My ability to serve my constituents has been hindered as a result of my privileges being impeded. It has been impeded both by my inability to assist them, to focus on these phone calls, and, more importantly, because my reputation as an accessible MPP has been damaged due to these robocalls.

Should you rule that this case is a breach of members' privileges, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion to send this case to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

I thank you for looking into this. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time. I look forward to your ruling on this serious matter.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further comments?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I rise to respond to the point of privilege that the member from Burlington has raised in the House.

This morning, I received notice from the member and a copy of a letter that she sent to you. In her letter, the member from Burlington states—and she's just outlined—that since April 16, her constituency office has been inundated with calls from individuals from her riding. The member further states in her submission that it's her belief that the large volume of calls being received by her constituency office are a result of robo-

calls, which she alleges have been placed by the Ontario Liberal Party to her constituents, advising that the member was being told to vote against the budget, which would force an election and jeopardize funding for a hospital in her riding.

As a result of the calls into her constituency office regarding her vote on the budget today, the member believes she has been unable to conduct casework in her constituency office. As I say, she has obviously just finished her presentation on this matter.

I would like to first point out that the member herself acknowledges that members' privileges do not extend to constituency work. I agree with the member, and point the Speaker to O'Brien and Bosc. At page 61, O'Brien and Bosc states, "The privileges of members of the House of Commons provide the absolute immunity they require to perform their parliamentary work..."

O'Brien and Bosc elaborates on this principle, at page 109: "In order to find a prima facie breach of privilege, the Speaker must be satisfied that there is evidence to support the member's claim that he or she has been impeded in the performance of his or her parliamentary functions and that the matter is directly related to a proceeding in Parliament...While frequently noting that members raising such matters have legitimate grievances, Speakers have consistently concluded that members have not been prevented from carrying out their parliamentary duties."

Speaker, I suggest that the member has not shown that her privileges have been breached. First, the member has not pointed to any parliamentary work which she has been precluded from performing as a result of the alleged robocalls; rather, the member's complaints related entirely to the performance of casework in her constituency office. To my knowledge, the member has continued to be able to perform all of her parliamentary work and has not provided any evidence in her letter or otherwise to the contrary.

Secondly, the member has merely laid out allegations that she has been hindered in her ability to conduct constituency casework. The member has not provided any evidence to show that this is in fact the case.

Finally, Speaker, I'd like to point you to a recent decision from Speaker Scheer in the House of Commons which involves similar circumstances. You may recall that in this instance, the MP from Mount Royal argued that robocalls hindered his ability to perform his duties as an MP. In that case, Speaker Scheer found that no breach of privilege had occurred. On December 13, 2011, Speaker Scheer ruled on this issue, arguing that although the member's constituency office had been bombarded by telephone calls, emails and faxes, the Speaker had "great difficulty in concluding that the member has been unable to carry out his parliamentary duties as a result of these tactics."

Once again, Mr. Speaker, having reviewed the presentation that has been made and the material that was submitted, I would argue that this does not constitute a breach of privilege. Thank you.



1530

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further comments?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It is indeed a privilege to be able to comment on the member's point of personal privilege and her privileges as a member. I am afraid, however, that I would have to side with the government House leader on this one. Certainly, one would want to comment that such a campaign done by a sitting government is egregious and certainly deserves comment. However, I would have to agree with the government House leader that it is not an abuse of privilege for the reasons he stated, because privilege has to do with the member's capacity to do her job in this place. Were it not so, one could imagine that the huge volumes of email campaigns that are undertaken by constituents for a variety of reasons, the huge volumes of calls that, again, are undertaken by various stakeholder groups, many of them partisan in nature, would also have to be ruled against.

So that is my input, and I hope it helps.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe-Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I certainly agree with some of the comments from the member from Parkdale-High Park when she said it's—I'm going to change her language and say it's reprehensible that the member from Burlington's riding would be targeted. I know the member for Cambridge was also targeted, and I think out Oakville way and Halton, as far as we can tell anyway, Mr. Speaker, with these robocalls, which clearly the government instigated because, when we first brought it up in the House, the Minister of Health knew all about it. She had done a tour of the hospital, aware the robocalls were going on at very the time she was touring the hospital. She was using the exact language in the press conference that she had at the hospital in Burlington, the exact language that the robocall was using. The minister didn't deny it in two or three rounds of questions in this House. So clearly it comes from the government.

Just in response—because we're going to ask you to set new ground on this, Mr. Speaker. It's nice that we always cite old precedents, but we're in the Internet age; we're in an advanced technology age. Surely to goodness the ruling shouldn't be just confined to something that happens in this building. Surely to God, as the honourable member says in her very articulate letter and presentation, our casework is in our constituency offices. It is wherever you are, folks, nowadays with a BlackBerry on your hip or a tablet in your hand. To say that casework can only happen up in my office, 201 north wing, or sitting right here—by the way, we discourage people from tapping away in here, and we are not allowed laptops, so it's hard to respond to your constituents and do your casework in this House. I think we're going to ask for a broader definition of what actually are the duties of a parliamentarian, because I know that's what has been cited by the honourable House leader for the government.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the House leader, as I was listening, said that the breach of privilege has to stem

from a procedure in this House, in this Parliament. Well, the procedure in this Parliament that all of this refers to is the upcoming budget vote. That is a procedure in this Parliament, so I think that's relevant, and I would ask you to take that into consideration.

Surely to goodness, as I said, we would ask that we expand our horizon on this thing and not cite things that happened a hundred years ago. We're in the high-tech age, and I know all of our colleagues in this House work darned hard almost 24/7. Certainly, when we're at home and when we're in our apartments at night, we're doing casework, we're doing our parliamentary work, and that should be considered in this case, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Further comment?

Just a technical reminder; this is probably not the time to say it, but I need to say it because it really drives them nuts. When you turn away from the microphone, it's very difficult for them to pick it up. So I would remind all members to please face your microphone so that Hansard can make sure that we pick it up.

The second thing I'd like to mention is, if we're going to continue, I would like you to be brief, if there's anything new to add to it. I'm getting a sense of where this point of privilege is going, so try to be brief, please.

The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, Speaker. Can you hear me? Just kidding. Thank you very much, Speaker.

First of all, I want to thank my colleague from Burlington, Ms. McKenna, for raising this point of privilege. I think it's vital that she stand, as is her right as a member, to challenge actions on the part of the government.

I know that my colleague our House leader from Simcoe-Grey has articulated some of the points. I want to be very clear about one thing: I believe she has made a prima facie case, as she cited precedents in the past with regard to a member's work and the vital work they do. I want to make it very clear, when the House leader uses the term "alleges"—Speaker, we have basically received an admission from the Minister of Health that they are aware and knowledgeable about the content of those robocalls.

It was not simply about a budget. Yes, it was precipitated by the budget vote, and they used that as their reason for making those calls. But she went on to say—unlike, as cited by my colleague from Parkdale-High Park, where people get involved in an email campaign, which is generally orchestrated by a third party not involved in the governing of this province, this was a robocall campaign about the budget and the member from Burlington that was orchestrated and initiated right in this House, in the offices of the Minister of Health. This is why her privileges have been violated.

A part of that robocall was not the suggestion that, "If you feel this way, you may want to contact the member." No. It was well orchestrated: "Simply push 3 and you'll be connected." It was very well organized and orchestrated and was designed specifically to impugn the

right of that member to do their job. Everyone here who has a busy constituency knows—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** This is an extremely important and serious issue, and the bantering back and forth is not helping me focus on the points being made. I ask all members to give everyone the respect they deserve in hearing this.

Member, continue, but be brief, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Her ability to do her work was clearly impugned by the actions of the government. Therefore, I say that in my humble opinion, Mr. Speaker, and as the member has in my opinion also duly indicated by citing precedents from O'Brien and Bosc and others, her privileges as a member of this assembly were indeed trod upon by this government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Cambridge.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm pleased to speak in support of my colleague the member for Burlington's point of privilege. I also was going to raise a point of privilege on this matter, but I thought, to save some time, that I would just support the member for Burlington's point of privilege.

I do want to address a couple of points that were made in the comments and commentary from people who have had the ability to speak on this already. I think one of the issues that was raised was preventing an MPP from performing his or her functions as an MPP. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I actually have gotten calls here in my Queen's Park office. I have actually fielded those calls myself. I'm not sure if Ms. McKenna has done the same thing in her office, but it's just a courtesy to relieve some of the stress our staff are being put under. In the process of doing that, I think our functions have been impeded, because we had to spend some time doing that.

One of the other things I wanted to mention with particular reference to the nature of the robocalls is the fact that these robocalls had inaccurate and fear-mongering information and statements that were expressed. If you get a phone call from constituents who have an issue and it's based on what you've done in this House, you can explain that away. But if you are trying to correct misinformation, to correct allegations that you are somehow not supporting the hospital, in the case of Ms. McKenna and myself, in our ridings, if we're spending time trying to correct a record which has not explicitly been based on fact and what has happened in the Legislature—I think that is one of the most troubling things of the robocalls: the fact that they are spreading misleading and fear-mongering information.

If I can just be very brief in terms of what that record is, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that since I have been elected in October, I had the privilege of raising the first private member's business in this House. That private member's resolution stated an expressed vote on hospital infrastructure projects right across the province of Ontario, including mine—Cambridge Memorial Hospital—which was actually voted on in this Legislature. I have to

say that the voting record will show that members of my party—Ms. McKenna from Burlington, myself and the members of the PC caucus—and all members of the NDP caucus voted in support of that motion, an explicit vote in support of our hospital expansions and those projects in our ridings. That is fact. That is based on what we have done, the conduct of what we've done in this place. The words that we've said, the statements that we've made, on record, in Hansard, show and express support on the part of myself, the member for Burlington and other members for their hospital expansion projects.

**1540**

Now, the allegations being made on the robocalls, Mr. Speaker, actually were included in the member for Burlington's letter, I believe. There was a transcript that was provided to the Hamilton Spectator. Included in that transcript was an affiliation to the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Also, I want to address the fact that the government House leader said that these are allegations of robocalls being placed on behalf of the Liberal Party. It's not just the Minister of Health who essentially agreed to it, but it was also the Minister of Finance, during question period last Tuesday, who basically agreed to the fact that they are going to continue to place phone calls in opposition ridings to—in my view—distort the facts and distort the record that we have had on this.

The allegations made and the reason why I believe they're inaccurate statements that we have to address, that we have to contend and compete with, relate to the fact that they're equating the budget vote with a vote against our hospital expansions. As I have endeavoured to discover and explore that very notion, Mr. Speaker, the only way that this budget could affect a hospital project is if it's specifically negated in the budget document.

On page 40 of the budget document, what we see are some projects being negated, none of which include Cambridge Memorial Hospital, in my case, and Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital, in the case of the member from Burlington. So in essence, a vote against this budget is not a vote against Cambridge Memorial Hospital because it hasn't specifically been negated. This comes from information that we've received from the legislative research branch. This is where we've discussed and discovered the protocols with respect to what happens during budget votes.

Again, these robocalls were deliberately trying to confuse the voting record and the specific support that myself and Ms. McKenna have had for our hospital infrastructure projects. I want you to take that into consideration because it's in the nature of responding to the phone calls that we're having to correct the misinformation that's being spread about what we've done. I think that if we do engage in these campaigns, we should be focusing on the correct voting record and the correct statements that we've made. In essence, that's what we find in Hansard.

I also want to point to some parliamentary precedent that would also be important, I think, in this case, Mr.



Speaker. In 2009, NDP MP Peter Stoffer raised a point of privilege in the federal Parliament concerning a mail-out known as a ten-percenter which went to his riding. The ten-percenter said that Mr. Stoffer was in favour of keeping the gun registry. Mr. Stoffer had opposed the gun registry since being elected. Former Speaker of the House of Commons the Honourable Peter Milliken ruled that a prima facie breach of privilege occurred because the mailing sent to his constituents "did distort their member's true position ... and, at the very least, had the potential to create confusion in their minds."

"It may also have had the effect of unjustly damaging his reputation and his credibility with the voters of his riding and, as such, infringing on his privileges by affecting his ability to function as a member."

I think the member for Burlington and myself would argue that our reputations have been unjustly attacked in the minds of our voters and the people who have received these robocalls.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, a similar case occurred in 2005, when NDP MP Brian Masse also had a ten-percenter sent to his riding that was inaccurate and was wrong about his position on the gun registry, funding for the RCMP, and also his voting record. Speaker Milliken had ruled that a prima facie breach of privilege occurred and "his ability to function as a member of the House has been interfered with."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to add those cases of precedent to your deliberations on this matter.

Once again, I want to offer my wholehearted support to the member for Burlington on her point of privilege, because I feel unjustly affected by these robocalls as well. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** First let me thank the member from Burlington for making her point as thorough as she did, and I thank all the members who made comment on this case. I'll reserve my ruling and report back to the House as quickly as possible. Thank you so much for this important discussion.

It is now time for petitions.

## PETITIONS

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm looking for my petition here now. It reads as follows, from the riding of Durham:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over" 1,035 "people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have" had their homes bought out to silence them;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the" McGuinty "government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent ... study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science," not politics.

I'm pleased to sign and support this and give it to Georgia, one of the pages.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Once again, I have another 2,000—over—petitions to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I agree with this, Speaker, and I will send it down with Talin.

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have a petition from residents from the great riding of York South-Weston addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

"Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

"Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice."

I agree with the petition. I will sign it and send it over with page Constantine.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a report from Ontario's Auditor General on the province's air ambulance service, Ornge, found a web of questionable financial deals where tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted and public safety compromised;

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"Whereas Ornge officials created a 'mini-conglomerate' of more than a dozen private entities that enriched former senior officers and left taxpayers on the hook for \$300 million in debt;

"Whereas government funding for Ornge climbed 20% to \$700 million, while the number of patients airlifted actually declined by 6%;

"Whereas Ornge was paid \$7,700 per patient transported by land ambulance despite subcontracting this service for \$1,700 per patient, a full \$6,000 per patient less;

"Whereas, after receiving questions of serious concerns at Ornge from the opposition in 2010 and early 2011, the Minister of Health did not provide adequate oversight, ignored the red flags and reassured the Legislature that all was well; and

"Whereas, on March 21, 2012, the Legislature voted to create a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals surrounding Ornge;

"Whereas such a committee provides protection from disciplinary action against employees who testify;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government of Ontario immediately appoint a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals surrounding Ornge."

#### TOURISM

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas tourism is a vital contributor to the economy of northwestern Ontario, bringing hundreds of millions of

dollars into the province's economy from other provinces and the United States, unlike other regions in the province whose target demographic is people who already reside in Ontario;

"Whereas northwestern Ontario's tourist economy has been under attack by government policies such as the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, the harmonized sales tax (HST), the strong Canadian dollar and difficulties passing through the Canada/United States border; and

"Whereas studies have shown that tourism in the northwest nets significantly more money per stay than other regions of the province, in part due to visitors frequenting historical sites, parks and roadside attractions that they learn about through travel information centres;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To keep the travel information centres in Fort Frances, Kenora and Rainy River open permanently to ensure that northwestern Ontario maximizes the benefit of our tourist economy."

I proudly support this and will give this to page Talin.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thanks to Jer's Vision, I have received a petition with thousands of signatures in support of Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act.

"Whereas all Ontario students have the right to a school environment where they feel safe, welcome and respected;

"Whereas school boards must take preventative measures against bullies and issue tougher consequences for those who participate in bullying;

"Whereas creating a safe and positive learning environment is an essential part of helping students succeed in school;

"Whereas schools across the province must support any group promoting understanding and respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities;

"We, the undersigned, believe in supporting all students who experience bullying in our schools. We feel the Accepting Schools Act (Bill 13) will make a real difference in the lives of youth in our community and especially LGBTQ youth."

Speaker, I agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it via page Dia.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I have a petition from my constituent Cynthia Bultje of Newmarket, and I read it into the record.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act.

"Whereas Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act, by identifying only four specific groups and using primarily homosexual and gender issue bullying examples, provides a narrow focus to the bullying issue; and



"Whereas this should not be a legislation designed to appease a special-interest group or address a narrow political agenda; and

"Whereas it has not been proven that the special-status clubs will lead to a more inclusive environment; and

"Whereas the legislation will result in curriculum that may be in conflict with the values of various faith families; and

"Whereas the legislation, as stated by the Minister of Education (Laurel Broten) during her speech at second reading, is intended to 'change the attitudes of society' rather than addressing the wrongful actions of the bully; and

"Whereas churches and traditional-principled schools renting publicly funded school facilities would be forced to abide by an undefined 'provincial code of conduct' which could be in opposition to their 'constitutionally protected faith'; and

"Whereas the legislation will interfere with the right of Catholics to create an education environment that is consistent with their faith;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend Bill 13 to address these issues:

"Broaden the legislation to uphold the worth of all children who may be bullied for all reasons;

"Send the message that the bully's actions are wrong for any reason, regardless of why they target the victim;

"Require tenants renting public school facilities to follow federal and provincial laws, rather than an undefined provincial code of conduct;

"Require school boards to respect the federally protected rights of all faith groups, as children from these groups are often bullied by their peers, the community and the governments;

"Remove references to the formation of specific clubs for certain groups (these clubs are not proven to lead to a more equitable environment) and place the emphasis on correcting the wrongful actions of the bullies;

"Include statements protecting the rights of all people, including the religious rights of individuals and groups—a segment of society that is often bullied because of its convictions;

"Ensure accommodation for any child whose parent identifies the curriculum to be in conflict with the values taught at home."

#### SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Healthy Foods for Healthy Schools Act has taken away students' right of free choice when it comes to dietary decisions, it is requested that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario review the act and consult all students of Ontario regarding the conditions and changes in the act to better meet our choices and desires;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Review the act with the consultation of students of Ontario. Make changes to the dietary restrictions and healthy education components of the act."

I support this and will give this to page Ranbir.

#### IMMIGRATION POLICY

#### POLITIQUES D'IMMIGRATION

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Respect for Diverse Communities."

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments;

"Whereas the settlement of new Canadians to the province of Ontario remains a function of the departments of citizenship and immigration at both the federal and provincial levels;

"Whereas Ontario still remains the destination of choice for new Canadians in our federation;

"We, the undersigned, ask that the province contact its federal counterpart, including but not limited to the Honourable Jason Kenney and his department, and notify them:

"That the proposed reduction in the number of centres in the GTA authorized to perform immigration medical exams, the IMM 1017, is ill-advised;

"That the reduction in number of centres in the GTA where services are offered in French is ill-advised;

"Que la réduction du nombre de centres dans la région du grand Toronto où les services sont offerts en français est mal avisée;

"That the virtual elimination of centres where services are offered in the GTA in the languages of Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Farsi, Tamil and Arabic is ill-advised, and that it not only will inflict undue hardship on those cultural communities but is generally discordant with the Canadian values of openness, pluralism and diversity."

I certainly support this petition, Speaker, will affix my signature and send it to you via Sabrina.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I have a petition here signed by thousands of people and addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks

and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario....

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I proudly affix my name to this petition.

1600

### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition from Scarborough-Agincourt addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which states:

"Whereas creating a safe and positive learning environment is an essential part of helping students succeed in school;

"Whereas bullying, homophobia and gender-based violence are unacceptable;

"Whereas we need to do more than just tell bullied kids it gets better—we need to work together to make it better now;

"Whereas the Accepting Schools Act would, if passed, help to end bullying in our schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the elected members of all parties help make our schools safer and more inclusive by supporting the Accepting Schools Act."

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it with Constantine.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The time for petitions has ended.

### ROYAL ASSENT

#### SANCTION ROYALE

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has assented to certain bills in his office.

**The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker):** The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

An Act to proclaim the month of May Jewish Heritage Month / Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine juif.

An Act to proclaim October 13 in each year as Major-General Sir Isaac Brock Day in Ontario / Loi visant à

proclamer le 13 octobre de chaque année Jour du major-général Sir Isaac Brock en Ontario.

An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012 / Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2012.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 19, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I rise today to speak to Bill 13, which, as the members of this House are well aware, attempts to tackle the serious problem with bullying in our schools. While its goal is indeed admirable and the purpose noble, there is a better way, and I believe that better path is to adopt Bill 14, proposed by my PC colleague the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, after taking literally years to consult and do research to come up with her legislation.

Speaker, this debate is about publicly funded schools having the means and the mechanisms available to both students and educators to tackle and eliminate bullying in whatever form that bullying may take. No student should be bullied for any reason. It's my sincere belief that when holding both Bill 13 and Bill 14 up to serious and objective scrutiny, Bill 14, the PC bill, is a more comprehensive and thus stronger piece of legislation to deal with the scourge of bullying in our schools.

Bill 14 focuses on three areas: prevention, accountability and awareness. It gives students, parents and educators a strategy to raise awareness and prevent bullying. But it goes further than that. It also offers up a process to resolve the conflict, collect data and report to the Ministry of Education. As well, the definition of "bullying" in Bill 14 is far more comprehensive and focuses on the behaviour of the bully as well as the impact on the victim. Sadly, Bill 13 does neither of those things. How are we to know how serious the problem is, whether it's getting better or worse, if there's no mechanism or system in place to track these incidents?

But there's one more area where our Bill 14 rises to the occasion. It's an area I'm going to take some time and expand on here. It has a concise definition of "cyber-bullying." This is an absolute imperative of any anti-bullying legislation that should pass this House. It's such a huge part of what we're dealing with here. Passing an



anti-bullying bill in the year 2012 without it would be like trying to split the atom by rubbing two sticks together.

An Ipsos Reid survey of Canadian teens done last year came up with the following findings with regards to cyberbullying: One in five Canadian teens has witnessed online bullying; 25% of kids between 12 and 15 have witnessed cyberbullying; 25% of girls and 17% of boys have witnessed online harassment; 51% of all teens have had negative experiences with social networking; 16% said someone posted an embarrassing photo of them; 12% had said someone had hacked their social media account.

As well, according to Pew Research statistics posted by Microsoft, two in five American parents report their child has been involved in a cyberbullying incident, and one in four educators have been cyberharassment victims themselves.

Speaker, educators surveyed consider cyberbullying as big an issue as smoking and drugs. Some 38% of girls online report being bullied, compared to 26% of online boys.

To not even acknowledge cyberbullying with a formal definition in the bill is more than a glaring oversight; it's a fundamental deficiency. Frankly, Bill 13 falls short in many areas and is incomplete. In short, it does not address the root cause of bullying.

Our party strongly believes in tackling bullying head on. Unlike Bill 13, our bill does exactly that, and in four critical areas. First, Bill 14 deals with both the reporting and the investigation of bullying incidents in our schools. Next, it makes school officials and boards accountable directly to the ministry when it comes to bullying. It also has an education and a public awareness component that is perhaps the most critical element of all when it comes to the prevention of bullying. Finally, Bill 14 makes an accommodation for remedial education for bullies to teach them that bullying is unacceptable.

Our bill also requires that anti-bullying lessons be incorporated in the provincial curriculum from JK to grade 12. Again, this is an area where Bill 13 falls short. It's inconceivable to me that a piece of legislation aimed at anti-bullying, at ending bullying, would overlook this incredibly important piece of the puzzle.

I also want to point out that we have made genuine efforts with members opposite to negotiate a marriage of these two pieces of legislation, Bill 13 and Bill 14, to make our schools the safest possible place for our children to grow and learn. Instead, we get incendiary quotes from the minister that, quite frankly, misrepresent reality and do nothing but poison the spirit of co-operation that should take precedence on an issue that's so important to the safety and well-being of Ontario's children. Sadly, the members opposite have refused to compromise in any meaningful way, and would rather resort to chest-thumping than brainstorming a solution.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to a school in my riding, école Odysée in North Bay, and in particular to teacher Sylvie Vannier. Sylvie and the students at

Odysée have been at the forefront of the anti-bullying movement that we've seen swelling over the last year. They started an anti-bullying Twitter account even before these two pieces of legislation were brought before the House. You can find it at @nonabullying.

I can tell you, Sylvie is incredibly dedicated to this cause, and her students have rallied around her efforts. To her and them, I offer my heartfelt congratulations on being a shining light in this fight against bullying. I urge Sylvie Vannier and the students at école Odysée to continue in making a difference. I hope other schools in my riding and across Ontario can follow their example.

Right at this moment, in committee room 1, the Standing Committee on Social Policy is meeting to consider Bill 14. I am pleased to see that, but I also believe that we should be having an all-party select committee on Ornge. I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Nipissing has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1612 to 1642.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask all members to take their places.

Mr. Fedeli has moved adjournment of the debate.

All in favour, please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 28; the nays are 43.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

The member for Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, I would urge all members to honour their commitment to an all-party select committee, and I ask for adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Mr. Fedeli has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1644 to 1714.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask all members to take their seats. Order.

Mr. Fedeli has moved adjournment of the debate. All those in favour, please rise.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Adjournment of the House. Isn't that what I said? No?

All those opposed, please rise and be counted by the table.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 23; the nays are 37.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

Questions and comments? The member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I rise here to speak in support of Bill 13. The member from Nipissing, in his remarks about the cyberbullying—in the bill, section 2 says specifically that the definition of bullying includes electronic. So, clearly, the bill does talk about cyberbullying.

The other piece I want to share with the House, Madam Speaker, is that last Friday I had an opportunity to visit Mr. Pollard and the grade 6 students at Kennedy Public School, because the students at that particular school were concerned about Bill 13. They had numerous questions for me, but they fully support this piece of legislation. One student, Cindy, said to me, “Why are the politicians at Queen’s Park not taking this bill seriously and, furthermore, why are they not passing the bill?”

At the end of the day, not only is this bill important for our children, the Toronto Star, last Saturday, in the—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Order. I’d ask all members who have conversations going on at this time to either cease or take them outside the chamber.

The member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Last Saturday, the Toronto Star spoke very clearly to all of us. They said, “If ever there were a” bill “that deserved to pass quickly and in a non-partisan manner, it’s this one.” The article also makes reference to these facts: “Bullying is a cruel practice that has far-reaching consequences for the victims and even for the bullies themselves. Opposition MPPs should put the needs of kids ahead of their desire to embarrass the government.”

I strongly urge everyone in this House to support the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It’s a pleasure to be able to rise again to speak to this piece of legislation, which is what we are sent here to do: to debate, to talk about important issues of the day, to protect the people who have sent us here.

What has occurred today is that our member from North Bay has stood up and has spoken at length—

**Mr. John O’Toole:** It’s Nipissing.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Nipissing; I do apologize—has talked to this piece of legislation. We are, of course, engaged in trying to encourage this government to do what this House has called upon them to do, which is call for a select committee.

However, Madam Speaker, I will inform this House that today Bill 14 was supposed to have been discussed at social policy. Bill 14, of course, is the bill put forward by my colleague from Kitchener—Waterloo. It is a bill that passed unanimously through this House and should have started with meetings on not only clause-by-clause but on public hearings. However, given a procedural power play by this government—and they know full well that what

you can do is call for this Bill 13 to be called so that Bill 14 could not be dealt with at committee—procedurally, what this government has done is tie up Bill 14 at committee, a bill that parents across Ontario agree with, that parents across this nation think is the leader in anti-bullying legislation.

If we want to call the truth here today—the member, I do apologize, is new and may not understand the rules and procedures of this House, but I will tell you, Bill 14 was passed. Bill 14 should be in committee. This government is delaying the anti-bullying legislation. They should tell the truth to the parents, they should tell the truth to the teachers and they should tell the truth—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments?

1720

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, before I pass my comments on the remarks made by the member from Nipissing, I would just like to quote to my colleague from Nepean—Carleton standing order 71(d)—she was complaining about a procedure in the Standing Committee on Social Policy. The standing order reads as follows: “No bill shall be considered in any standing or select committee while any matter, including a procedural motion, relating to the same policy field is being considered in the House.”

Speaker, the reason that the Standing Committee on Social Policy was not able to come to order, correctly called by its Chair, was because the standing order itself dictated it.

Now, Speaker, we have had seven bells, representing 12 hours and 55 minutes worth of debate—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I’d ask the member to restrict his comments to responses.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Let’s then go to a chronology of what has happened here. On February 23, the Minister of Education met with the member for Kitchener—Waterloo. On February 27, the minister provided the member with a list of elements of her bill which could be included in the Accepting Schools Act. The minister wrote to the member for Kitchener—Waterloo on March 28. Staff met with the member on March 20. The minister wrote to the MPP again on April 11 to inform her that the bulk of her bill could be included in the Accepting Schools Act, and on April 18, the minister gave the member for Kitchener—Waterloo proposed amendments that included more than half of her bill in legislative language. What are we doing here? Let’s get both of these into committee. Let’s get it passed, let’s get it adopted and let’s get it enacted.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O’Toole:** Madam Speaker, I think it’s important to put on the record that the member from Nipissing is committed to fairness in everything I’ve seen him do in his time here, and I think it’s important for viewers to understand and respect the fact that he moved two procedural motions, one adjourning the debate, the other adjourning the House. The purpose of that, the motive behind that, was the lack of compliance or co-



operative spirit by the McGuinty government that would normally be expected here.

Premier McGuinty—his cabinet group—refused to have a select committee on reviewing the scandalous waste at Ornge. The viewing public may not get that, but I think the member from Nipissing was fair. He really gave them due notice of the motive for his procedural wrangling. Now really, what's important—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Madam Speaker, it's—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd urge the member to speak to the bill.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I am speaking to the motive.

I'm quite concerned. The argument has been made by our critic Ms. MacLeod that Bill 14 is before committee. That bill has been broadly accepted across the province of Ontario—certainly in my riding of Durham—and if you're actually listening to other members, you'll find that there's an ability to achieve something here.

All of us are opposed to all forms of bullying, okay? But what we find is that there's bullying happening over there. They're bullying us to support them. That's the issue here. That's why these procedural things. Our House leader, Mr. Wilson, has made it clear when working with your House leader: Set up a select committee and this will end the ineffectiveness of this chamber.

In all fairness, we believe that what you're doing now—the public and the children here—we feel that we're being bullied. We feel that we have to agree with you on everything. Now, we could—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. Further comments and questions?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Oh, that's right: Response from the member for Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Speaker. When I left off, I was speaking of Sylvie Vannier, the teacher at école Odyssee in North Bay and her students who are incredibly dedicated to this cause. I spoke of her website and her Twitter account. She and her students have rallied around her efforts, and to her and them I offer my congratulations on being a shining light in this fight against bullying. I urge the students to continue to make a difference. I hope other schools in my riding and across Ontario can follow their example. Indeed, it would be a tragedy and a shame if the efforts of Sylvie Vannier and the students at école Odyssee were to go for naught. If we pass legislation that is incomplete and doesn't address the root cause of bullying, that has no way to track the problem or offer up processes or solutions to deal with it, we risk the possibility of doing just that.

So I say to our members and to our members across the floor, as the member for Nepean—Carleton has said, we ask that we stop delaying the debate on our Bill 14. Let's do this for Sylvie, let's do this for the students, and let's do this for all students all across Ontario. Let's get serious about this Bill 14 that our member has proposed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Simcoe—Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I believe we have unanimous consent to deal with the matter pertaining to tonight's late shows. I seek consent to reschedule the late show standing in the name of Ms. MacLeod from tonight at 6 p.m. to tomorrow night.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Is there consent? Agreed.

Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I am pleased to rise today to provide a voice to the many parents and students who contacted my constituency and Queen's Park offices, concerned about the important issue of bullying.

We all know that bullying and violence in our schools is having a devastating consequence on children across this great province. We know that when students feel safe, they achieve success. Unfortunately, this is not the case in our schools today.

Consider these sobering statistics: Bullying occurs every seven minutes on the playground and every 25 minutes in the classroom. Half of all Canadian adults were bullied as a child or teenager, according to a recent Harris/Decima survey for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. Some 71% of students have identified bullying as an ongoing problem; 46% of grade 12 students surveyed by the Ontario Student Trustees' Association admitted to having been either the victim or the perpetrator of bullying.

This is not acceptable, and it's why we need to do everything in our power to make our schools a safe place for our kids. It's also why we, as legislators, need to take our responsibility to protect children seriously.

Madam Speaker, many organizations in my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga and the region of Waterloo are taking action to stop bullying. I'd like to highlight a few examples of the good work being done in my riding.

Take the region of Waterloo's public health department. They're working with some 100 elementary schools to decrease bullying among children and youth. The local Big Brothers Big Sisters of Waterloo Region has also worked to raise awareness about this issue by holding fundraising bowling events called Bowl for Kids Sake. This unique fundraising campaign challenges individuals and businesses to step up and strike out bullying in Canada by supporting the work of volunteer Big Brothers and Big Sisters. The John Howard Society of Waterloo region, which has been a long, strong anti-bullying advocate, offers workshops to schools and community groups on bullying prevention and other social problems encountered by children and our youth.

Finally, February 29 was Pink Shirt Day at many of our Waterloo region schools. By wearing pink, students and adults stood together to raise awareness about bullying and the detrimental effect it can have on students. The Waterloo Region Record's Newspapers in Education, along with the Kitchener Rangers, supported the day by selling pink T-shirts.

To augment all this good work, members here of this House and this Legislature need to develop a comprehensive approach to dealing with bullying. Our constituents expect no less. They're eager for us to address the widespread bullying that affects nearly one third of all children in our Ontario schools today.

So, now is the time for us to work together, to protect our children and ensure their safety. Unfortunately, though, the Liberals seem content to play politics and push through their flawed bill while outright ignoring Bill 14, the Anti-Bullying Act.

Madam Speaker, Bill 14 is a comprehensive anti-bullying bill that focuses on prevention, accountability and awareness. It provides students, parents and educators with a strategy to raise awareness and prevent bullying, as well as a process to resolve it, collect data and report to the ministry.

The Liberal bill does none of these things and fails to address the root causes of bullying. We tried to sit down and work with the Liberals to negotiate a merged bill to make our schools the safest place possible for our children.

Ironically, the Liberals' unwillingness to listen to the opposition parties' request to appoint a select committee on Ornge is a textbook case of bullying. Because of their

resistance to this very important proposal, I have no choice but to move adjournment of this debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Kitchener–Conestoga has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1731 to 1801.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I ask all members to take their seats.

The member for Kitchener–Conestoga has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise and be counted.

All members who are opposed, please rise and be counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 22; the nays are 37.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I declare the motion lost.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House adjourned at 1803.*



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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
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Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
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Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
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Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Party Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative



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<b>Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
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Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield  
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Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod  
Jonah Schein  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett  
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh  
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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof  
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Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
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Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch





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**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**  
First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
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Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 25 April 2012**

**Mercredi 25 avril 2012**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 24, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / *Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm pleased to resume debate on this important topic. As I said yesterday, many parents and students have contacted my office on this important issue, and I'm glad to leave my voice in this debate again today.

In fact, people outside the partisan fray really expect us to work together. Recently the Waterloo Region Record said that "government would be wise to look at Bill 14 with the thought of incorporating some of her suggestions"—"her" being the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, Elizabeth Witmer. "That's because Bill 14 offers a much clearer, much more comprehensive approach to deal with bullying."

I'd like to highlight some of the key provisions that address bullying in our bill, Bill 14. Bill 14 has an extensive component dealing with cyberbullying, something that obviously, with the Internet today, is becoming more prevalent, and we obviously need to address the cyberbullying aspect. Our bill would require the ministry to issue a yearly report on the number and severity of bullying incidents that occurred in the previous year and what steps the ministry has taken at further prevention. Our bill includes age-appropriate anti-bullying education in the provincial curriculum beginning in kindergarten, in fact, and continuing through elementary and secondary schools.

The PC bill, Bill 14, puts student safety first by mandating the Ministry of Education to establish a model bullying prevention plan that serves as the basis for school board prevention plans across our province. Bill

14 clearly stipulates that school boards are required to ensure that bullying is addressed effectively. The PC alternative requires bullying plans to be publicized and available to students in their agenda, online and throughout the school. It also requires take-home materials for parents and the posting of the plan on the school and board websites.

Our bill mandates that school boards provide remedial programs offered by social workers and psychologists for bullies. Our bill would require school boards to provide training and professional development opportunities for teachers on the issue of bullying. Our bill requires boards to offer voluntary programming for victims of bullying. Our PC Bill 14 formalizes a process for investigations to finally provide the accountability parents and students have demanded recently through the court system.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to bullying, all members of this House agree that strong action is long overdue. Unfortunately, the Minister of Education seems to be stuck in a time warp, a pre-election Liberal utopia where this government can ignore members of the opposition and steamroll over all of us on this side of the House. Thankfully, Ontarians, those days are over. This minority Parliament means that we need to work together to put forward the best possible legislation to protect our children. It means that when the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario supports major elements of our Bill 14, the bill introduced by the member for Kitchener-Waterloo, the Liberals and the government need to take notice on that side. Still, the Liberals refuse to compromise, and actually moved forward unilaterally to end weeks of discussions on merging Bills 13 and 14.

Unlike the McGuinty government, we believe in tackling bullying head-on. That's why our bill, Bill 14, addresses four critical areas: reporting and investigating of bullying; accountability of school officials and boards to the ministry; education/public awareness to prevent bullying; and remedial education for bullies to teach them that bullying is unacceptable.

While preparing to speak on this bill, I had the opportunity to read the words of a bullied student from York region, which I'd like to share with you today:

"For three long years, I waited for an adult to step up to the plate. You know, the people my parents taught me would help. No help came, and I was victimized for three long years. I almost became a statistic. I wanted to take my life. No one cared about my life and what I was experiencing, so why should I? It's time to hold those accountable for the well-being of our youth. I no longer trust adults. Why should I?"



Today we have the opportunity to step up to the plate. We have the opportunity to put aside partisan politics, to put Ontario children and youth first. I encourage the Minister of Education, who's here today, to return to the table and work with the opposition. We have the majority in this Legislature to create and pass a strong bill that is supported by parents and stakeholders and, most importantly, Speaker, for our youth today who, like the young gentleman in York, have experienced such dramatic bullying in their schools. I thank you for the opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Davenport.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'll just take a couple of minutes here to restate our absolute commitment to passing this bill and sending it to committee, and the fact that this Legislature has to get together and take both the Conservative bill and Liberal bill, take the best parts of them. Let's get it done. This is the most ridiculous thing I've seen here, in terms of partisanship. Let's move this forward. The only thing—and I've said it before as I've stood and spoken on this debate—is that we need to put resources to the anti-bullying curriculum as well. So just speaking about anti-bullying is one thing; putting real dollars behind it, putting resources in place for teachers to support both the victims of bullying and the folks who are involved in bullying, is the most important thing of all. But let's put this aside. Let's move forward. The government has my support on this and the support of our party to move this forward to committee. I hope that the opposition party will also move forward with this. I will sit down. Thank you, sir.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Mississauga-Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, I say to my colleagues in the PC Party, if they really want to move forward on this, let's let debate collapse. Let's get it into committee. Let's get it into committee today.

Seven times, representing 12 hours and 55 minutes of delay, the PC Party has just rung the bells needlessly on this bill. There's no cause for it at all. The Minister of Education met with the member for Kitchener–Waterloo on February 23. They were able to agree that many elements could be included in both Bills 13 and 14. The Minister of Education provided the member for Kitchener–Waterloo with a list of elements of her bill to be included in the Accepting Schools Act as far back as February 27. Why are we standing here talking about this? Let debate collapse; let's get it into committee.

0910

The minister wrote to the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo on March 28. The staff met on March 20. The Minister of Education again wrote to the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo on April 11, informing her that more than half of her bill could simply be included in the Accepting Schools Act. And on April 18, the minister gave the member for Kitchener–Waterloo the proposed amendments that included more than half of her bill in legislative language.

There's no more need to stand here and ring bells. There's no more need to stand here and posture. What's

needed now is to let this debate collapse and get this bill into committee where both of them can be combined so that both bills can be enacted in time to be in force for the next school year.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I appreciate the opportunity to rise and to congratulate my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga for taking a stand in this House today to talk about something that has been on everyone's mind, and that is anti-bullying legislation in the province of Ontario.

I congratulate all members of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus who have done, unlike what most other members here have done which is actually take a stand and bring stories from their communities to share in this chamber. When we do that, the most disrespectful part of this is that they want to shut down debate. We have 37 members of our caucus. That's 16 more members than what we had at this time last year. We know in our caucus that people feel that they would like to add their position on this legislation. It is their right to bring their views to this assembly on a matter of such great importance. What I find is shocking is something that this Liberal government has done for the six years that I have been here and the three mandates that I've been here, which is shut down public debate on issues of great importance. Yet they haven't put forward a time allocation motion, which I suspect will be forthcoming.

That said, I will say this. Yesterday I did attend a social policy meeting. The gavel never did hit the table to start that meeting because the government used a procedural power play to block Bill 14, the only anti-bullying legislation that has passed second reading, from being discussed at committee. We know, having spoken with parents from across Ontario, that they support wholeheartedly the measures in Bill 14. If the Liberal Party was so focused on getting to work, they'd get to work at committee, support Bill 14 and put their amendments through at that stage.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I thank our critic and the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, who I believe spoke compassionately and I believe effectively with respect to Bill 13.

Now, I really think that our critic, Ms. MacLeod, just now said the procedures on both sides of the House aren't being helpful. We felt we had an agreement initially that Mrs. Witmer's Bill 14 would go to committee along with Bill 13 and that there was a consensus that the two bills would be brought together and we could work together to make sure that, in respect to students and protecting their safety—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Speaker has noticed about five sidebars. I'm trying to listen and I can't hear and I'm right here, so we'll keep it down. If you have any disturbing discussions you want to attain, go outside. Thank you.

Go ahead.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you for that kind interruption, Speaker. If you could put more time back on the clock, I could make my point more convincingly.

I think really the issue here is that, of the two bills, 13 and 14, Bill 14 is a more comprehensive bill. It has clear rules and definitions that are missing in 13 and we believe quite strongly that, working together, we can have a better piece of legislation that protects children from bullying. All of us have agreed at the start here that we are opposed to any form of bullying. Let's not confuse this with other positions that have been stated here.

I think that the member from Kitchener–Conestoga made a very good reference about the young child being bullied for three long years. It's about time we showed some respect for students and got this to committee, worked together so we have a bill ready for September.

Work with us. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has shown more compassion on this, I put to you, than the government side. You've tried to bully us into submission. That's what's happening.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Kitchener–Conestoga has two minutes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank those that provided comments on my first opportunity to speak to this important bill: the member from Davenport; the member from Mississauga–Streetsville; obviously our critic, the member from Nepean–Carleton; as well as the member from Durham.

In fact, the member from Durham just raised an important aspect of my comments, and that was from the young boy from York who was bullied for three years. As you are probably well aware, I recently had a new son, Murphy, who was born about nine weeks ago. And do you know what? When I look at him and read that story, I hope that stories like that don't affect young Murphy when he gets older.

You know, last night after I made my initial remarks, I took them home and had a bit of a glance again at them. A couple of things that really stood out that I find shocking: in fact, bullying occurs every seven minutes in the playground in our schools throughout Ontario, every 25 minutes actually in the classroom; half of all Canadian adults, when asked, said that as a teenager they were bullied; 71% of students have identified bullying as an on-going program.

I'd like to read an article by a father, Allan Hubley, who has been mentioned many times in this House, who was quoted recently as saying, "Every MPP needs to rise to the challenge to protect all of the children and get this bill passed. It's important that each measure that they add into this bill helps the children, helps the kids. It's just as important that people stay engaged in this discussion." So I'll echo the comments that the member from Durham just recently made and offer the government the opportunity to make this motion, in fact, to get this bill—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Okay, this is my last comment on this. If the member from Nepean–Carleton—sorry; if the members want to discuss this

across the floor, while your person is speaking, I would suggest you cut it down. Otherwise you might want to go outside and you can make all the noise you want. That's the last warning, folks. You're finished? Thank you.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I still have 15 seconds.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Well, I didn't stop the clock. Your people were interrupting you, so you might want to blame them.

Further debate?

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I just wanted to start off by saying that the debate and discussion around this issue has been an exceptionally moving experience. It has really underscored the fact that underneath all of the armour and arguments we are flesh and blood, and it reminded me that those of us who are privileged to come together and work in this space are most persuasive when they speak from the heart and the personal experience. Remarks from the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities were very touching and enlightening, for example. The comments from the member from Scarborough–Agincourt also brought this issue home, from a different but no less touching perspective.

And of course, from our own caucus, I have been bowled over by the passion and perception of my Conservative colleagues. Two in particular stand out: the member from Nepean–Carleton, who spoke eloquently about the issue of bullying and the wrenching ways it has impacted the youth and families of her riding; and especially the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, whose dedication to this very important cause is inspiring in its depths of commitment. As a former teacher and education critic and a former Minister of Education, she brings a remarkable scope of experience to this very important issue.

This issue is something that has unfortunately become a timely and tragic concern for families and communities across this great province. As a mother of five children, bullying resonates with me on a core level. I feel it in my bones and in my heart, because I have gone through a number of episodes with my son. Bullying has driven me to pull him out of the school because things were just getting too far out of hand. It had gone beyond the ability of school administrators to intervene. My youngest, a teenager who is becoming more and more grown up every day, has in the past been persecuted for a vision problem he was born with. The problem was becoming out of hand. He had been beaten up so many times that we pulled him out of the unsafe environment. But even as I did that, I took him aside and said to him, "Son, I'm going to take you out and take you to another school. But ultimately you're going to have to learn the tools to deal with people who treat you the way they do." I didn't want others to define who he is. I did not want him to cement his identity as a victim, but as someone who had control over his own destiny.

0920

One evening when we were all home sitting together after dinner as a family and talking about this and that, eventually we got around to shoptalk, and we started



talking about some of the debates we've had here in this space and some of the legislation before us. Sooner or later, we got talking about Bill 13 and Bill 14, and what it came around to was an idea that has been expressed here on more than one occasion, and certainly an idea my son has voiced, which is that we are all different—uniquely gifted, uniquely flawed—and that discrimination doesn't play favourites.

It seems contradictory to want to advance the cause of any one group as being more. We are all God's children. When my son sits there and says to me, "Mom, why are you just talking about one thing when we're all discriminated against? That's discrimination, when all of us feel the way we feel."

Watching my son getting up every morning and going to school, I honestly can't fathom how he could do that under a cloud of anxiety and fear. I think about tragic cases that made headlines last year, like that of Mitchell Wilson, who took his own life rather than return to the school where he was bullied relentlessly.

Our communities need to be accepting of everyone, places where all children and youth can grow and learn in an inclusive environment. This is something we are all responsible for. It falls to each of us—teachers, parents, peers, the whole community—to move forward together in a way that allows all students to feel safe, included and welcome in this province's communities, not just in their schools. To varying degrees, we can all own the tragic failures of the system as it stands, and we must all do our part to create a safe environment for children, particularly in school.

Encouraging students to recognize and report bullying will reduce bullying and similar bad behaviour in their school.

Adults in the student's life, whether at home or at school, must become fully aware of the extent of the bullying and victimization problems in the school. Empathy and intervention on the part of adults can lead to the kind of positive outcome that children and young people, especially those suffering bullying, feel powerless to make.

Parents also need to take responsibility for their own actions. The way parents behave around their children can sculpt their values and behaviours for years to come. It can also have a profound impact on the moral intelligence of those children. Kids see things very clearly, and they can carry the lessons of childhood for a lifetime. It is important that we raise them well.

If we truly want to make a difference, we must hold ourselves to a higher level. At the end of the day, I clearly want everybody to be accepted. I want all children and youth to be free to succeed in a safe, secure and positive environment. I want everybody to feel that they're okay, and not be in a situation where they can't get out of bed.

They feel that they need to be respected, loved and cared for. Every last one of us deserves that, Speaker. It comes down to tolerance, which is something at the heart of a civil society. That's how we like to think of ourselves as a society and as a country.

It is unrealistic to expect kids to sort out or alter the dynamics of bullying by themselves. It is equally unrealistic to saddle schools with the bulk of the burden for promoting anti-bullying messaging and measures. Even so, schools are an important beachhead in the battle against bullying.

On this front, although we are considering two like-minded bills that were introduced back to back, I would suggest that Bill 14 is the stronger of the two. It addresses four critical areas in current provincial laws and policies as they pertain to school safety. Those are reporting and investigating, accountability, awareness, and remedial programs.

This, to me, is the crucial difference between Bill 13 and Bill 14. Bill 13 asks every school board to use anonymous surveys to collect information on bullying from its students at least once every two years—full stop. Bill 14, meanwhile, is very clear about its expectations when it comes to reporting, transparency and accountability. It spells out the responsibilities of principals to report on bullying incidents at least once a year, or more frequently if the school board requires. These reports must include the number of reports on acts of bullying received during the school year; the number of those cases in which the principal, after investigation, believes that bullying has occurred; and the number of those cases in which law enforcement officials were brought into the picture. That information goes up a chain of command to the minister, and from there into an annual report on the minister's progress on anti-bullying.

Moreover, Bill 14 also requires that the board establish disciplinary action for persons who have falsely accused others of bullying. Bill 13 describes no such mechanism. Bill 14 advances the cause of anti-bullying in this province closer to ensuring that our schools and communities are given much-needed tools to eliminate bullying.

When we think of bullying, we tend to think first of the schoolyard, of incidents between children and youth, of suggested and explicit threats. But we have also recognized that bullying takes place across the entire spectrum of our lives on the most basic level. As Bill 13 notes, bullying behaviour occurs in cases "where there is a real or perceived power imbalance."

But while Bill 13 does mention cyberbullying, it fails to do so with the level of detail that Bill 14 does. This issue is one that a lot of families have been dealing with in recent years, and it's one that hits home for me, since one of my daughters, a sweet and kind girl, was a target of vicious cyberbullying at her school. Cyberbullying leaves real scars. It is a growing concern. With youth being so wired into the Internet, it opens the floodgates to 24/7 bullying, something we've never had to contend with until recently. We need to lock horns with that issue.

On those critical counts, I feel that Bill 13 falls short of Bill 14. But however this process plays out, I am confident that we can take what we have learned along the way and put it into action, creating robust anti-bullying legislation for our children. Anti-bullying legislation can

make room for difference and usher in hope, but nobody can do this alone. We should join together in the interests of our children and work. Thank you so much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** You know, there's no denying that there are goods and bads in both of these bills—and I shouldn't say "bads"; that's using the wrong term. But there's goods in both of them, and we should be moving them forward.

I try and always look at the best in everybody in this room, and I choose—I choose—to believe that we all need to do the right thing and we all can do the right thing, and that's ultimately what we want to do with both of these bills. So let's get them to where we need to get them in order to address what we need.

I just wanted to give you a little introduction. I've introduced Candice in the past, but I want to introduce you to another fine young girl from Algoma-Manitoulin. Her name is Tamara Tait. I want to tell you a little bit of a story about her. This is a young girl who took an initiative upon herself to highlight her personal battle with youth depression and how her safe zone, which normally with kids is always in your home, wasn't, for her. Her safe zone was in the school, where there was a guidance counsellor who actually recognized some of the problems and the issues that she was having. Her safe zone was sitting down with her and having those discussions. Now, if that guidance counsellor did not pay attention or have the tools in order to recognize the problems that this little girl was going through, she may have been lost—and that would have been a very, very big loss.

So this young girl—I supported her when she went into the regional public speaking competition in Sault Ste. Marie. She asked me to go support her. I wholeheartedly went there and sat down and listened to her great speech and her personal battle with youth suicide. Now, she was lucky—we are lucky to have her still with us today, and I'm going to be working with this young girl. But the final question she asked me a couple of weeks ago—she wants to have my opinion in regard to a paper that she's doing, and this is her question, and I hope you guys all try and maybe look at it—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. I'm sorry; time's up. Questions and comments? The member from Ottawa Centre.

0930

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to respond to the member from Burlington.

This is a very important piece of legislation. This is a very important issue for this Legislature. I keep hearing all members agreeing with this. Most importantly, I'm hearing from students, from kids in my community in Ottawa, about this issue and the need to expedite the passage of Bill 13 as quickly as possible.

I want to read a couple of statements that I have received, and I have received hundreds, Speaker. Veronica wrote to me, "I want Bill 13 to happen because every-

one is born as the person they are. It is not a choice. People should be able to be themselves and love who they want. I am disgusted at people allowing people to get bullied to the point of suicide. This needs to stop now. I'm a straight girl who loves people for who they are." These are students, Speaker.

Ruth wrote, "I support Bill 13 because no one deserves to be pushed, beaten, spit on, called names, shunned, segregated or bullied for any reason. We can't be judged for race. We can't be judged for religion. Why should we be allowed to be judged based on sexuality? Please help change this."

Speaker, students out there in my community in Ottawa just don't get what the big fuss is here, why our bells are ringing. They ask me this question all the time. What is this delay? Why are we wasting 12 hours and 55 minutes of precious time in this Legislature? Why are we not just moving ahead with this bill now? Let's bring Bill 13 and Bill 14 together so that we can create strong anti-bullying legislation in the province of Ontario and be a leader in the country.

This is a great opportunity for us to demonstrate to young people how noble this profession is, how public service is the epitome of helping our communities. By passing this bill, by making sure that we get Bill 13 to committee so that we can work on Bill 13 and Bill 14 together, we can help students like Ruth and Veronica in my community in Ottawa.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank my colleague from Burlington for her views on the debate before the Legislature today on Bill 13, and also her views on Bill 14.

Right now, Bill 14 has already passed second reading. It's before committee. The government that talks about obstruction, and how they are opposed to obstruction, is the very group of people obstructing the passage of Bill 14 and its work through committee right now. They talk out of both sides of their mouths when it comes to the issue of bullying.

I had the opportunity during the break week to visit St. Mary's Catholic school in Deep River for an anti-bullying day. I was pleased to meet with them, address them, participate in some of their program. Clearly, one of the things that I can see there is that they're not interested in the political games that the government is playing. They're interested in doing something to combat bullying.

When you look at the two bills, and you look at the meat and the teeth that are in Bill 14, that was introduced in this House by my colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo, Ms. Witmer, and has passed second reading, it is clear that that is the bill that will actually do something to combat bullying. It's not a politicized bill that is trying to divide people based on one issue. People are bullied for a variety of reasons, and no one reason for bullying has more gravity than any other.

The one thing that is absolutely certain, Speaker, is that bullying is wrong, regardless of who the bully is and



who is being bullied. If these people on the other side would get that, they would be working harder to pass Bill 14 and move ahead with Liz Witmer's bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Algoma-Manitoulin for the second time.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and with your indulgence, I'll be splitting my time with my friend from Trinity-Spadina—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Sorry, I just—

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I know this is out of order—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Sorry. Member, please sit down. You're not allowed to do twice, I've just been informed.

The member from Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I just want to say that New Democrats support Bill 14, which is the Conservative bill, and New Democrats support Bill 13, which is the Liberal bill, and we think this conflict can be solved. What we clearly have here is not a failure to communicate. We have two bills that each bring something that makes anti-bullying a much better thing in this province, and I'm happy to say that we New Democrats are happy to mediate these differences between Liberals and Conservatives.

We are not far off. I mean, New Democrats support much of what is in Bill 13 and support much of what is in Bill 14. We just have to problem-solve here. I know it's difficult in politics, and when someone says, "There are no politics in what we're doing but there's politics in what you're doing," it's hard to trust, right? There are politics in everything we do and say, all of the time. And what New Democrats are trying to say is that there is something good in both bills. It's not that one has more meat than the other, and that's why we should support the one with the better red meat. I'm not sure that's the way we should approach these issues. I believe we can solve this and we can do this well.

Now, my friend asked me to read something. Do you want me to read the whole thing?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** No, just the statement from—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Just the quotation?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Yes.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** "Most people die, not the music still inside them," is the quote you wanted me to finish off with, and I think it's a good quote to finish off with. Merci.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Burlington has two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Thank you so much, Speaker. I'd just like to say this today: that it is a fundamental contradiction when we're saying we're all for everybody but we're more for somebody else.

I'm standing here today myself because, at the end of the day, when I listened to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, he echoed absolutely everything that I've heard from my son, and I was touched when he spoke. I actually spoke right after he had gotten up and spoken himself, because life is about—I'm with my son,

with my husband, and we're with him every day. The children who don't have the opportunity to have parents that love them and care for them—but what I'm trying to say is, when I walked even up to the school with my son and they're calling him "Bubbles" and they're tripping him, as a parent that's standing there, how does he get out of bed? I think to myself that I adore this child, but he has had this adversity his whole life with his vision, and yet he gets up every day. There are kids that can't get up, but every day he gets up, and he walks out. I said, "Mac, let me say something." And he says, "Mom, please don't. It makes it 10 times worse." And he comes home, and his shoulder is bruised, or he's called "Bubbles" every day of his life. I don't know how he gets out of bed. I honestly don't.

But at some point we have to stop and realize it's for everybody, and my problem with all of this is that it is a fundamental contradiction. My son or any other child being bullied feels exactly like anybody else does, and you can't say that one person feels more than the other person. You can't possibly say that, so you can't segregate separate people. It's discrimination. You're saying you're for everybody but you're more for somebody else, and there is absolutely no way that I'm going to stand and actually have anything to do with that, because everybody is God's children, and every child deserves to be not bullied.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** It's a pleasure to stand before my colleagues in the House today to speak to Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act.

First I'd like to talk a little bit about what bullying is and why implementing legislation to keep our children safe in our schools is so important. The Red Cross defines bullying as a method of "misusing power to degrade, humiliate or hurt" somebody. "Bullying is cruel, hurtful behaviour that is not based on discrimination."

A related concept, harassment, is "discrimination that involves characteristics protected by Canada's Human Rights Act," so things like "ethnicity, religion, age, sex, family status, disability and sexual orientation."

**0940**

My colleague Mrs. Witmer has also introduced anti-bullying legislation, as we are all aware; more on that later. For now, I'll read a definition of bullying in the Education Act with the proposed amendments by Mrs. Witmer:

"'bullying' means the severe or repeated use by one or more pupils of a written, verbal, electronic or other form of expression, a physical act or gesture or any combination of them if it is directed at another pupil and if it has the effect of or is reasonably intended to have the effect of,

"(a) causing physical or emotional harm to the other pupil or damage to the other pupil's property,

"(b) placing the pupil in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or damage to his or her property,

"(c) creating a hostile environment at school for the other pupil,

“(d) infringing on the legal rights of the other pupil at school, or

“(e) materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school;

“(‘intimidation’)”.

Ms. Witmer has proposed an amendment to update the definition by including cyberbullying. This can be:

“(a) creating a Web page or a blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;

“(b) impersonating another person as the author of posted content or messages; and

“(c) communicating materials to more than one person or posting material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons.”

The fact that a child may be subject to any type of bullying or harassment is totally unacceptable. According to dosomething.org, 160,000 kids stay at home for the express purpose of avoiding bullying every single day. I can say that my own children have been subject to this, just by virtue of them being what are called “gingers”—my kids are both redheads—and there’s a day actually set aside to abuse kids with red hair. It’s kind of scary as a parent when you face that down, when you have two that have red hair.

For these reasons, what we do here today—to debate legislation that addresses bullying and protects our children for any and every reason they may be targeted—is of the utmost importance. School must be a place where they can feel safe, learn and ultimately become better people. The thought of them being in an environment where their peers are being broken due to bullying breaks my heart, and it breaks my heart that it happens in any school board for any reason. There’s still a lot of work to be done in our schools to ensure children can feel safe at their school, regardless of whatever legislation we pass. That’s a fact. You can’t legislate everything. It’s certainly a great start, though. For this reason, we need strong, thorough, well-researched anti-bullying legislation that protects every child—full stop—from degrading treatment of any kind at all.

We need to ensure that we create and foster inclusive anti-oppressive environments in our schools. Every child has the right to education and shouldn’t have to feel as though they must stay at home from school to avoid bullying or, worse, make the decision to take their life like young Mr. Hubley did.

Bullying is not a gender, size, sexual orientation or ethnicity issue, it’s an everyone issue. This means everyone. Bullying has a detrimental effect on the victim, on the bully, on their friends, on their family, on the school and on the greater community at large, and on our dignity as human beings and our dignity as active citizens in our own community. All kinds of kids, no matter what, need to be protected—full stop, period.

I’d like to take a minute to discuss what has been happening in this House with the two anti-bullying bills up for debate to stress that bullying legislation is not a political issue, it’s not a partisan issue, it’s not a campaign platform. It’s our job. Protecting our children is our

job. Protecting them from harassment, intolerance, intimidation and violence, that is our job. That is what we are hired to do by the constituents we represent here. Anything less and we are failing our children and we are failing our communities.

My colleague Ms. Witmer saw a need and she took action. She started two years ago to do her research in consulting with parents, students and educators to put together a comprehensive bill to better manage bullying and protect our children in our schools.

Bullying affects society in two detrimental ways: through the victim and through the perpetrator. To quote the bill itself, for the victim, “Bullying can leave a harmful and long-lasting mark on its victims,” including “painful emotional and mental scarring and a lifelong struggle with self-esteem. Bullying can therefore impair the ability of a victim to contribute meaningfully to society and to function normally in the victim’s family environment.

“Bullies suffer as well,” especially in the long term. Often, bullying may indicate “deeper psychological and emotional problems. Children who bully more frequently experience psychological problems later in life”—and often become the victims of bullying themselves because of the very bullying they exercised earlier in their life—“such as aggressive tendencies and occasional symptoms of depression” or even learning disabilities.

My colleague Ms. Witmer saw not only the short-term detriment to our children’s immediate safety in our schools but also the long-term effects on our society. Her bill reflects this deep level of understanding and comprehensively protects every child now and into our future.

I most highly appreciate that our colleagues on the other side saw our two years of work here and were inspired to develop their own ad hoc version of an anti-bullying legislation, Bill 13, which we debate today. It was the introduction of Bill 14 that spurred the pre-emptive action with the introduction of their own version of the anti-bullying legislation, Bill 13, which was quickly mocked up and put up for debate.

It’s disappointing to see the political process being used to play games of catch-up instead of collaborating to achieve a common goal, the protection of our children, and that is where I feel our children may be failed. This is why I’m going to ask our Liberal friends to take both bills to committee so their best aspects can be merged. I know that we have heard this from my colleagues previously. However, the response has been a shameful disappointment, with the government stonewalling and toeing their lines. Why, of all issues, should the government use our children for their political agenda, especially when so much time and care was taken to develop Bill 14? No party has a monopoly on compassion for kids. Many of us have our own kids. All of us were kids once, and we all get it: Bullying has no place in our school environment.

From my point of view, these two bills, Bill 13 and Bill 14, are not in competition; they are complementary. The legislation must include:



- strong accountability measures requiring bullying incidents to be reported and investigated and for those stats to be publicly reported;

- clear definitions of bullying;

- early intervention, with awareness training starting in kindergarten;

- a province-wide ministry model for prevention and school board prevention;

- counselling for victim and perpetrator;

- ongoing professional development;

- parent and community consultation;

- publicizing anti-bullying laws.

These are just some of the things that make up the core of Bill 14 and were derived from two years of research and consulting with many stakeholders. This is why merging the bills would create the most effective and comprehensive legislation. We have an opportunity to supplement that incompleteness with another legislation supported by two years of investment.

Now I would like to share a few commendable efforts in bullying awareness and prevention by my local constituents. One is the I Love Me Club. It's a pleasure to recognize a young constituent, Mackenzie Oliver. Mackenzie is 12 years old and attending elementary school in Barrie. She founded the I Love Me Club, which has taken off and has been receiving wide recognition by a number of groups. It was inspired a few years ago when a few young classmates talked about how fat they thought they were. Mackenzie and her mother realized this wasn't right and created the "I Love Me" T-shirts for distribution among her friends at her birthday party. Mackenzie says, "I think it matters, because people discriminate and tell other people that there's something wrong with them. It's important for people to know they matter in the world and what others say isn't important at all. If you believe them, you're going to end up like they say you are, never knowing if you look all right or if your hair looks all right. It really affects your self-esteem if you let other people tell you you're no good." Mackenzie started this off on her own, and it has spread to many other cities across the country and across the province. She has been recognized by the Lieutenant Governor for her efforts all on her own. She's 12 years old.

Another person is Sharron-Ann Reynolds, in my riding. As a councillor, I met her because her son had been cyberbullied, and that cyberbullying manifested itself into essentially one of the worst beatings I've seen on YouTube—in a parking lot a block away from my own house. When I saw that happening, I contacted Sharron-Ann and tried to work with her. She created her own organization, called I Am a Smart Kid, to fight cyberbullying—all on her own.

Without the efforts of people like this, and without proper legislation, we're not going to ever see cyberbullying ended. It doesn't end with legislation. It ends with awareness and people acting as active citizens—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** It seems to me that whenever I have House duty, this bill is being discussed endlessly.

The first thing that I would ask the people of Ontario to do is to go to the legislative website and read Bill 13 and Bill 14. I would ask them if they can actually see a difference in those two bills. There's very little difference. We're all talking about the same thing: bullying.

It's my understanding that Bill 14 is before the committee right now, the justice and policy committee, or whatever it's called. We want to get Bill 13 before that committee so that those members can discuss those two bills together and maybe take the best of both and come up with a final bill.

**0950**

Now, you know, everybody is accusing everybody else of playing games with this, and there have been a lot of games played here and probably on all sides of the House—and I'll be the first to admit that. But one of the games that the Tories have been playing with this bill—and that's why it's been debated here so often—is that whenever they talk about this bill, they make the bells ring for half an hour, wasting half an hour of everybody's time. That's why this bill is back here day after day, because every bill has to have so many hours of debate; I've forgotten exactly what it is but something like seven or eight hours of debate, etc.

So let's stop all the foolishness. You're accusing us of playing games; we're accusing you of playing games. I've looked at both bills; I've read both bills. They basically come down to exactly the same thing. Why are you making the bells ring all the time? Why is it that we played along with you guys in order to get Bill 14 before the committee? Play along with us and get Bill 13 there so we can finally come up with a bill that everybody can agree to. We all think it's a major problem in this province, and we can pass a law to stop bullying of whatever kind altogether. That's really what this is all about, and let's all stop playing games.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I want to thank very much our member from Barrie for eloquently demonstrating and sharing personal stories from victims who stand behind a bill, Bill 14, that stands up for the rights and the concerns of victims, because our Bill 14 is so comprehensive. It just doesn't ice over some of the popular issues in schools these days; Bill 14 gets right to the root.

I was taken earlier this morning when a bullied student from York region was referenced, and there's a quote from this particular student: "For three long years, I waited for an adult to step up to the plate." Well, ladies and gentlemen, in this historic House we have an opportunity to work together and demonstrate that we can step up to the plate and work together. We need to see some progressive steps taken in terms of amending Bill 13 so that it is a comprehensive approach to dealing with bullying. You know, there are other examples in our province where people are stepping up to the plate, and it's time we catch up and show that we're serious about this heart-wrenching issue.

I just read in our clippings a day or two ago about the principal of a particular school that actually mediates.

They pull the victim into a room together with the bully, together with at least one of their parents, and collectively as a group they talk through why the bullying happened, how the victim felt and how the bully feels after listening to the victim, and together they come up with a solution. We need to follow that example. There are leaders out in our communities—and again I come back to this quote from our poor student who was bullied in York region. It breaks my heart. We need to listen long and hard. We need to step up to the plate and demonstrate that we know how to work together.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Peterborough

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I listened intently this morning to the member from Barrie talk about Bill 13 and 14. You know, I can only echo some of the comments that have been made by the Attorney General on this particular thing. I know from first-hand experience—my wife, Karan, happens to be a principal in an elementary school in Peterborough, St. Patrick's school in Peterborough, and I've worked with Catholic trustees. I've read the Catholic trustees' guidelines and have a very close relationship with the Kawartha Pine Ridge board, many principals of that board and certainly trustees of that board. The kind of information I was getting back—when we had our week break and an opportunity to chat with all of them—was that we need to get this process going on. They all recognize that there are some very important and very innovative aspects of Bill 14, presented by the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, and indeed Bill 13, which we're discussing this morning, a bill that's been brought forward by the government.

But at the bottom line it's about children. We can continue with bells and whistles and everything else, but we've really forgotten that these two bills are targeted at children, to protect children from bullying—any type of bullying. That's the premise of the government bill, that's the premise of the private member's bill, Bill 14. So it's incumbent upon us all to get a reconciled bill passed by the province of Ontario in order to meet the new school year, which starts in September this year. I think it's the expectation of people across this province that we all come together as quickly as possible to make sure that a bill is put in place. We all have stories, Mr. Speaker. You have stories from your community about bullying from a wide variety of aspects. We really need to get this done. We could continue with bells and everything, but there's an expectation: Ontarians want us to get a solid anti-bullying bill in place.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's my pleasure to address the comments from my colleague from Barrie as well. I appreciate his insight into not only this bill but this issue. We hear comments from across the floor as well on a daily basis chastising this party for its insistence on continuing to debate the bill. What we have on the other side are two-minute snippets from time to time from members of the government giving comments on other people

speaking, but we haven't heard a member of the government debate this bill within the 10- or 20-minute time slots for a couple of weeks now, Speaker.

Our issue is that this is a very important subject. They have completely politicized the subject by, in their opinion, putting more weight on one type of bullying over another type of bullying, absolutely. What we need to do is ensure that there is a belief and a culture within our schools—and indeed, this doesn't end with schools. That's not the only thing that is going on in society.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Attorney General.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We need to ensure that bullying is as socially unacceptable as drinking and driving is today, Mr. Speaker. It starts right at day one, as we rear our children. It progresses into the school system. What children want to know is that everyone is raised with the understanding and the belief that anyone who bullies is wrong, and anyone who is being bullied is the victim of a wrongdoing. That's what needs to be the focus in this Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Barrie has two minutes.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to revisit a story from my initial remarks. There's a young boy from Barrie who was beaten quite badly not far from my house in a school parking lot as a result of cyberbullying. The result of this on this young man was that he was unable to go to school. He didn't feel safe in his own community, and the fact of the matter is that the school was ill-equipped to help him in his situation. Not that there was any lack of will there to do that, but certainly they lacked the knowledge, the training and any sort of legislative infrastructure or mandate to really be able to help this young man. For the past year and a half, he has not been going to school and has only been able to get any of his education in summer school.

The good news is that as a result of that, it spurred on lots of his friends and his family to actually help him out. His mother started a group, as I said: iamasmartkid.org. I'd love it if everyone would check it out and see what it's doing to help stop cyberbullying in every community across the country. It shows that we need more than just talk. We need people to be active citizens, to contribute to their own communities to get a part of this and not be afraid to speak out about bullying, in whatever form and shape it takes, to take the debate out of here and put it into our communities where it really matters, where people are really listening to what's going on and actually take action and get teachers and parents and principals and counsellors and people of all sorts who are talking to people to actually help these kids at a core level, where they are going to be able to understand the consequences of being a bully and how you can take care of yourself after having been bullied. That's what we really need to focus on here, Speaker, and I'd love to see that happen.

1000

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?



**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Three minutes ago I was asked to participate in this debate and I'm very pleased to have that opportunity to do so and to speak to second reading of Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters, which was introduced, as we know, by the Minister of Education on November 30.

Interestingly, this debate is also informed by another private member's bill that was brought forward the very same day, as a matter of fact, by my colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. Her Bill 14 is entitled An Act to designate Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in Schools and to provide for bullying prevention curricula, policies and administrative accountability in schools.

As has been pointed out during the course of this debate, Mr. Speaker, the bill that was brought forward by the minister—I should say the member for Kitchener–Waterloo; she should be the minister. She served for many years in a very distinguished way as the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Labour. This private member's bill that she brought forward was passed by this House on March 29. So we have a private member's bill that is now before a standing committee in the Legislature and we have a government bill that we are still debating at second reading.

I've been informed by the table, Mr. Speaker, that this debate has now gone on for about 15 hours. The government occasionally chastises the opposition in their impatience and in their arrogance, I would say, when they suggest that opposition parties shouldn't be able to meaningfully debate bills. They suggest at times that we have no right to bring forward the concerns that we hear in our communities, and that shows, unfortunately, a degree of arrogance has begun to characterize this McGuinty Liberal government in this House. We have to point that out.

We also have to point out the fact that, when it comes to bells that are being rung—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you. I believe the Attorney General is carrying on his own debate here when the other member is speaking. I'd appreciate it if he would limit it to the odd comment. Thank you.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Thank you, Speaker. When it comes to ringing bells in this House, it's something that opposition parties tend to do when they have an issue with the government. Certainly in my time here in this place, when our party served in government, I recall the Liberal opposition constantly ringing bells when they were displeased with certain issues, of course, as well. So it's not unusual; it's provided for in the standing orders.

In terms of the debate time, the time that is spent when the bells ring, of course, is added to the debate time. So at any point in time the government could conclude the debate by moving a motion that the question now be put or, as they've done in the past in many instances, bring in a time allocation motion, if they really want to end the de-

bate. Of course, we in opposition believe that we should have the opportunity to debate these issues and we continue to assert that right. In fact, it's our constitutional responsibility to bring forward the views and concerns of the people who bring them to our attention, and it is our responsibility to point out the flaws and drawbacks of government legislation. I think it's important that people understand that when the government tries to mislead them about what the opposition parties are doing in response to the government's bills.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member knows we don't use that particular word. Withdraw that.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I withdraw, unequivocally.

Again, looking at Bill 13 here, we look at the preamble that the government wants us to consider. The preamble of the bill reads as follows:

"The people of Ontario and the Legislative Assembly:

"Believe that education plays a critical role in preparing young people to grow up as productive, contributing and constructive citizens in the diverse society of Ontario"—I don't think anyone would disagree with that;

"Believe that all students should feel safe at school and deserve a positive school climate that is inclusive and accepting, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability;

"Believe that a healthy, safe and inclusive learning environment where all students feel accepted is a necessary condition for student success;

"Understand that students cannot be expected to reach their full potential in an environment where they feel insecure or intimidated;

"Believe that students need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitude and values to engage the world and others critically, which means developing a critical consciousness that allows them to take action on making their schools and communities more equitable and inclusive for all people, including LGBTQ... people;

"Recognize that a whole-school approach is required, and that everyone—government, educators, school staff, parents, students and the wider community—has a role to play in creating a positive school climate and preventing inappropriate behaviour, such as bullying, sexual assault, gender-based violence and incidents based on homophobia;

"Acknowledge that there is a need for stronger action to create a safe and inclusive environment in all schools, and to support all students, including both students who are impacted by and students who have engaged in inappropriate behaviour, to assist them in developing healthy relationships, making good choices, continuing their learning and achieving success."

We see this preamble. That's the intention of the government, I guess, in terms of wanting to set the stage for the consideration of the clauses. The various clauses are, of course, laid out in the bill. I would compare this to Bill 14. I think it is appropriate to bring Bill 14 into the context of this debate, because it is something that the Premier has publicly acknowledged. He indicated that

there are good points and relevant aspects to the bill that was brought forward by the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Her preamble is different. It says the following:

“Bullying, particularly in schools, has become an increasing problem in Canada. Victims of bullying have suffered mental anguish, bodily injury and even death at the hands of their tormentors.

“Bullying can leave a harmful and long-lasting mark on its victims. It can leave children with painful emotional and mental scarring and a lifelong struggle with self-esteem. Bullying can therefore impair the ability of a victim to contribute meaningfully to society and to function normally in the victim’s family environment.

“Bullies suffer as well, since bullying may be indicative of deeper psychological and emotional problems. Children who bully more frequently experience psychological problems later in life, such as aggressive tendencies and occasional symptoms of depression. Childhood bullies often display the same types of behaviour as adults and are found to be more likely to harass co-workers or commit spousal, child or senior abuse. Studies have shown that bullies are far more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour. According to Public Safety Canada, students who engage in bullying are 37 per cent more likely than those who do not to commit offences as adults.

“Bullying also creates a poisoned atmosphere among persons who observe the bullying of others. For example, the occurrence of bullying can intimidate observers, lead observers to excuse, accommodate or even encourage the bully or, worst of all, lead them to try bullying themselves. The negative cost of bullying to society at large is therefore considerable.

“A safe and inclusive learning environment in schools is critical for students to achieve academic success. Parents and students must be confident in knowing that the school environment is free from harassment, violence, intolerance and intimidation, all of which are forms of bullying.

“In December 2009, the Occupational Health and Safety Act was amended to add part III.0.1 to provide protective measures against violence and harassment in the workplace. Such harassment can include bullying. It is appropriate to expand that approach to deal with bullying in schools. Bullying in schools is particularly odious since its victims are children who are often less able to defend themselves than adults are.

“It is appropriate to designate a week to express our collective opposition to bullying and to take measures to raise awareness and to prevent bullying in all of its many forms in the school environment.”

Again, I have expressed support for Bill 14 in this Legislature. I did so on the 29th of March. Again I would remind you, Mr. Speaker, that Bill 14 is now before the standing committee and could be considered for further discussion. I gather and I understand that the government would like to see passage of its Bill 13, but again I would say to you that we have an obligation in opposition to

debate these issues and bring forward our concerns. But I think at the appropriate time there will be a conclusion to this debate, and I would expect and anticipate that the government members will dutifully come in and vote for their bill. I’m not sure what the New Democrats will do. They may come in and vote; they may come in and not vote. We’ll see what process will unfold. In all likelihood there will be a resolution, and in all likelihood, I would anticipate that there will be further discussion on this issue.

Again, I would commend the members to consider the fact that Bill 14 is a comprehensive approach to this bill that was undertaken by a distinguished member of this Legislature, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, who served with distinction in cabinet in a number of important, significant responsibilities and has a great deal of expertise in education as a former school board trustee, a former chair of the Waterloo county school board, a member of the Legislature for so many years, a former Minister of Education and former Deputy Premier, and who indeed thoroughly studied this issue for a number of months and brought forward, I think, an excellent bill that, quite frankly, could be passed into law within a few days.

We could turn the argument back on the government and ask them why they’re delaying consideration of Bill 14 in committee. Why is it that they’re not calling Bill 14 to come back into this House to allow for passage today?

We could say that, Mr. Speaker. That would be a similar argument to what the government is saying about us. But I think in the final analysis, I expect that there will be an effort on the part of all sides of the House to ensure that an appropriate approach is taken to this issue to ensure that we take a strong stand against bullying in our schools.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It’s my pleasure today to welcome to the Legislature for Sarnia–Lambton Day, from the chamber of commerce and from industry, Mary Prendiville, Marlene Wood, Judy Morris from Lambton College, Spencer Dickson from Lambton College and Cindy Buchanan from Lambton College. We also have here with us today Terry Doyle and Daniel Ricottone from Cogeco TV.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It’s my pleasure to introduce two friends of page Georgia Koumantaros, Lola Bule and Arlo Kempf. Welcome to the chamber.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I’m delighted to introduce members of the Electricity Distributors Association. They are celebrating their 100th anniversary this year. They’re joining us in the House, in the legislative dining



room at 4:30. Let me introduce three members—Jim Keech, Rene Gaten and Teresa Sarkesian—among the many who will be here to welcome us all.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'm happy to have my constituency staff down for the day. I'd like to introduce John Fraser, Jena Sasko and Eileen McCoy, who are down for training today. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I would like to introduce Anne Pyke, who is the mother of page Katarina Jakobsh. I'd like to welcome her here today in the Legislature.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'd like to introduce two wonderful guests today, Andrew Sobolewski, who lives in my riding and is a teacher, and Adriana Cupsa, who also lives in my riding and is a lovely community worker and volunteer.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Today I'd like to welcome and introduce to the House Anna MacNeil-Allcock, Dawne Deeley, Yvette Van Veen, Clive Wilkinson, Cathy Prothro, Emily Ugarenko, Lori Gray and Selma Mulvey, who were all here at the Legislature this morning for Bill 16 hearings.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to introduce some young people from my Oakville provincial youth advisory committee: from Abbey Park, Alex McKeen and Shakeeb Ahmed; from Blakelock high school, Rialda Zvrko; from Oakville Trafalgar, Harrison Pope and former page Simon Cook; from Loyola high school, Conor Lewis; from St. Mildred's-Lightbourn school, Keely Mayhard and Georgina Evison; and former page Natalie LaMarche from Iroquois Ridge. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am delighted to welcome Ronnie Gavsie, the CEO of the Trillium Gift of Life Network, who's joining us in the gallery today, Speaker.

I do believe we have unanimous consent to wear the Trillium Gift of Life beadorator.ca pin in recognition of national organ tissue donation week.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Unanimous consent has been asked to wear the organ donors' button. Do we agree? Agreed.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I'm very pleased to welcome in the members' gallery two leaders of the cycling community in Ontario: firstly, Eleanor McMahon, founder of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition. Eleanor is a long-time advocate for bicycling in Ontario as part of a healthy lifestyle and for the safety of cyclists on Ontario roads; also, Diane Freeman, councillor of the city of Waterloo, who is also one of Ontario's great cycling leaders.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Noah Alcantara-Aquino is the page captain today. Let's give him a good round of applause. His family is in the members' gallery: Reynaldo Aquino, his father; Agnes Alcantara-Aquino, his mother; Ava Alcantara-Aquino, his sister; and his grandparents, Joe Aquino and Josie Aquino. Welcome.

**M. Taras Natyshak:** Ça me donne un grand plaisir d'accueillir les élèves de l'école Sainte-Jeanne-d'Arc de Brampton aujourd'hui ici. Ils ne sont pas ici en ce moment; ils sont dans le trafic, mais on les accueille ici

aujourd'hui et leur enseignante, Chantelle Pizzala, avec qui j'avais la chance d'aller à l'école primaire. Donc, on les accueille ici aujourd'hui.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine from Brooke Avenue, Howard Brown, who's done great work with the brain injury association of Ontario.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome a friend of mine from Prince Edward-Hastings riding, Jack Alexander, in the west gallery.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery, all the way from Scotland, Dorothy and James Ramage, who are here visiting Carreen Paterson from Hansard services. Welcome to Ontario.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is for Premier McGuinty. Ontario is facing a \$30-billion deficit, a \$400-billion debt, and almost 600,000 people are searching for work. This Premier's response to that crisis is a tax-and-spend deal with the NDP, one that will triple the debt and result in more unemployment. Instead of reining in his reckless spending, he reverts to his most natural fall-back position and starts taxing Ontarians.

Will this Premier please explain how his new \$500-million tax will help create private sector jobs in Ontario?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The official opposition has been absent without leadership again. This morning, we presented to the people of Ontario the impacts of the arrangements that were made with the New Democrats. First of all, I'm pleased to report that, as a result—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister.

**Interjection:** You're talking to yourself, as usual.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's not helpful.

To start with, I'm hearing heckling when the question is getting answered from the opposition side, as I am with the government side, and when the answer is coming, I'm hearing heckling from the government side and from the other side. Let's stop it now.

Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the deficit will come down lower—starting, in fact, last year, and every year through 2017-18. We will reduce the debt by a total of \$3.5 billion. Every nickel of new revenue is going directly to reducing the deficit.

I'm proud that we created 46,000 jobs last month. I'm proud that we've created 300-and-some-odd-thousand jobs since the downturn began in 2009.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Speaker, since it's obvious that the member opposite has no desire to actually answer my

question, I'd like to read a quote from the Premier spoken in this very House just two months ago: "I say again to my honourable colleague that we've also specifically said no to tax increases. We will not be taking money out of an economy we're trying to get going." That's a quote.

It sounds like that within two months the Premier's philosophy on economics did a complete about-face. He's now committed to increasing taxes.

Premier, with unprincipled flip-flops like these being the standard operating procedure for your government, how can you expect any willingness by us or anyone else to negotiate on any issue, now or in the future?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Well, had the member opposite and his leader been at the table, it might have been a very different outcome. They refused to do that.

Since we had an opportunity to dialogue yesterday, there have been some other interesting comments made in various media outlets and so on. Let me just quote this one:

"The downside of the budget exercise is the clear, non-cooperative position taken by Tim Hudak.... [T]hey spent several weeks on the outside, noses pressed to the glass....

"Hudak ... really must get past knee-jerk ideology and take a seat at the table, lest he be completely left behind."

You were left behind. You are absent without leadership. And you know what? Had you come to the table, the outcome might have been very different. I respect the NDP for having the courage to sit down and make this Legislature work.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Your budget was fundamentally flawed, and it's small wonder that the PC caucus made the decision to reject it in the first place, outright. Sometimes, Minister, political leadership means saying no to those who just don't get it and to those who are never going to get it. Your government and your budget certainly fall into that category.

If you wanted our support, you should have given us even faint hope that you finally understood the mess that you'd gotten yourself into and that you created for Ontario. Instead, you showed us you still don't get it. How can you pretend to be surprised that we gave you a round-sounding no?

Premier and Minister, just as a heads-up so that you won't be surprised in the future, as long as you stay on this destructive path of reckless spending, you will always get a no from this party.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, that may give them cold comfort as they are trying to explain their abandoning of their role. But let me tell you how others see it. "Hudak's budget strategy is the most difficult to figure out.... It's left Hudak on the outside looking in on this budget process...." That's the Barrie Examiner.

"The only one who has failed the voters in all of this is Conservative leader Tim Hudak.... He offered no solutions for solving Ontario's economic problems.... Perhaps he should step down." That's the Windsor Star—not exactly a leading voice of liberalism here.

And here are some other interesting comments coming out of the Toronto Star: "Tim's position has left him out of being any relevant part of the news for weeks," confided one PC insider." Even your own—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, I asked the Premier to comment on the fact that Alfred Apps, former president of the Liberal Party, had arranged for a meeting with the Minister of Health and Dr. Christopher Mazza. In his briefing note to Dr. Mazza, he was very specific in advising him to downplay the fact that he had met with the Premier.

I asked the Premier, what discussion took place in that meeting? The Premier refused to answer and he deflected once again to the government House leader. This is a serious issue, and I believe the people of this province want to hear directly from the Premier what his involvement is in this scandal.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm delighted to speak to the question today. I've had an opportunity to find out a bit more about what it is that my honourable colleague was referencing.

On Sunday, October 30, 2005, at a time shortly after we had declared an emergency circumstance in the community of Kashechewan, some of those residents had been evacuated to Sudbury, Ontario, under the leadership of then-emergency commissioner Julian Fantino. Situated at the airport was the emergency medical assistance team. I flew up there on a Sunday to meet with some of the residents. The person who guided me as part of a tour through the emergency medical assistance team tents was one Chris Mazza. That's my only connection with Chris Mazza.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, I'm going to ask the Premier to go back to his notes and to his calendar one more time, because that's not what Alfred Apps was referring to. He was referring, and he made specific reference in his notes to Dr. Mazza, that that meeting was at a reception.

I'm going to ask the Premier one more time: Why would he not remember that meeting with Dr. Mazza?



Perhaps his advisers told him to downplay that meeting with Dr. Mazza in the same way.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Durham, come to order.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I've said all that I can with respect to any meeting that I ever had with Chris Mazza. It may be that at some point in time, at some reception or other—I have had the good privilege, fortune, to serve as Premier for some nine years now and I have attended many, many functions. I have had the opportunity to meet with thousands and thousands of people during the course of those years. It has been my honour to do so. It may very well have been that I met with Mr. Mazza at such a reception, but as I move my way through receptions, I meet with thousands of people.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** One would have thought that the Premier would remember meeting someone as infamous as Dr. Mazza. He's not your ordinary citizen, Speaker. After all, this government signed over to Dr. Mazza, for \$1, the entire air ambulance system of the province of Ontario. Is the Premier actually expecting us to believe that he would not have recalled that chance meeting with Dr. Mazza? You see, Speaker, here's what's happening. This is the kind of lack of recollection that we're experiencing from chiefs of staff, from other ministers, every time they come before the committee. That's why we need a select committee of the Legislature.

I'm going to ask the Premier one more time: Will he agree to give us a select committee of the Legislature so that we can get to the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Order.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we've referenced recently the fact that the official opposition has been missing in action, away without leadership, when it comes to lending shape to an ever-stronger budget. But it's worse than that. They're now actually sticking a stick into the spokes of the people's business.

We want to move ahead with a number of important bills that will protect the public interest. The Accepting Schools Act: They want to ring bells rather than stand up for our children in their schools. We want to protect millions of tenants; they want to ring bells rather than stand up for tenants in Ontario. The healthy homes renovation tax credit, which speaks to our shared responsibility to help our parents and grandparents lead healthy lives in their homes: They want to ring bells rather than stand up for the healthy homes renovation tax credit.

It's worth people lending shape to a better budget. They prefer to ring bells on—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. If we had a contest for shouting each other out, I think we'd be worldwide champions.

New question.

## AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. I would like to know, Speaker: When did the Minister of Health first learn about Ornge plans to purchase their own helicopters?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will go back and look at my notes. What I can tell you is that I became aware of the problems at Ornge, thanks to the good work of the Auditor General, on October 27 last year. I acted quickly. I acted decisively. We now have completely new leadership at Ornge. I know that some of that new leadership team is actually appearing before committee, so they can inform members of the committee about exactly the changes that are ongoing at Ornge.

I'm proud of the changes we've made at Ornge. I know we're on the right path. I know we've still got more work ahead of us, and I will continue to do that work.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was not the question I asked, but let me try again. The helicopter purchase was pretty central to Ornge's operating plans. Can the minister tell us whether the issue of helicopter purchases was raised with her during a briefing organized by Ornge in 2010, and, if she can remember anything about this, if she would share it with us?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I welcome the member opposite's interest in the operations at Ornge. We have a committee that is currently looking into those operations. The member opposite is at that committee and she is able to ask questions at that committee. I think it's important that members of this Legislature do have the ability to ask those questions, and I'm glad that this process is now under way, Speaker.

I can tell you that when I became aware of issues at Ornge, I acted quickly: new leadership, a new performance agreement, and I've introduced new legislation. That legislation is important when it comes to enhancing oversight and transparency, and I look forward to her support.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Last week, the Liberal Party president, Alfred Apps, testified in committee: "The government was thoroughly, painstakingly and, in all cases, truthfully briefed in advance of Ornge taking any of these actions." The minister seems to tell us that she was not aware of the purchase plan at Ornge that was going to acquire their own air ambulance and completely transform the way medical transportation was going to be done in this province. Was Mr. Apps misleading us last week?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, as I say, the committee is doing its work. I was very pleased to attend the committee. In fact, I was asked to attend for, I think, an hour, and I stayed for two and a half—lots of opportunity to ask questions there.

I think we have really taken appropriate steps when it comes to Ornge, and Ornge did take the time to brief ministry officials. They also took the time to brief members of the opposition. Members of both parties opposite were briefed at the same time we were about the plans to develop a new business model at Ornge. In fact, my understanding is that they paid, very handsomely, one Kelly Mitchell to do that work for members of the opposition, Speaker.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is also to the Minister of Health. Not only did Mr. Apps testify with respect to the helicopter purchase; Mr. Apps testified with respect to the corporate structure that was surrounding Ornge. In sworn testimony before the public accounts committee, Alfred Apps said that the “government was ... in all cases, truthfully briefed” in respect of Ornge. How can the minister indicate that she did not know what was going on?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, what I can tell you is that there was a briefing—I did not attend it, but members of my staff and members from the ministry did—where they were informed of the changes to the corporate structure. This is not new, Speaker. We have circulated broadly the letter that accompanied that briefing. We also know members of the opposition were briefed at the very same time.

What I can tell you, Speaker, is that I’m glad the committee is doing its work. My focus is on transforming our health care system. There are people in this province who need to get more home care. I’m making the changes necessary to get more home care. We’re working with our doctors, because we know that doctors want to support better care for the people of this province. A lot of changes are happening in health care that I think are pretty important.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, today the chief of staff of the Ministry of Finance also testified with respect to Ornge. He indicated that he took a 30-minute meeting with Alfred Apps in respect to Ornge. He explained that he had had that 30-minute meeting. How can the government credibly claim that they didn’t know what was going on at Ornge, that they didn’t know about the public and the private structure of the corporations? How can they claim that they didn’t know?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, the opposition is trying to confuse two issues. One is changes to the corporate structure. We were all informed of that. The other issues were the issues that were raised by the Auditor General through his audit of Ornge. It was the results of the audit that were extremely troubling—extremely trou-

ling. The Auditor General revealed practices that were entirely irresponsible, which is why we have completely changed the leadership at Ornge.

The work that the people at Ornge do is vitally important. They save lives every day. It’s important that the leadership at Ornge understand that they ought to be there for the people, the patients they serve, not for their own benefit.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** This afternoon, we’re going to hear more testimony from more Ornge insiders, and it’s clear we’re going to hear more of the same. The minister simply doesn’t have a leg to stand on.

This afternoon, the former chair of Ornge, Rainer Beltzner, will be testifying before public accounts. Will the minister claim that she was never told anything, or is she finally prepared to admit that she didn’t do her job properly?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The member is correct in saying that there will be an opportunity this afternoon for the committee to hear from more witnesses. This committee is a standing committee of the Legislature. The idea of looking into Ornge was set up with support from all sides of the House. There’s a robust list of witnesses who have come forward, including the Minister of Health, who talked about the good work that she has done as minister to address these concerns.

If the honourable member wants to hold committee hearings here on the floor of the House, again, we have many, many questions on this side of the House about briefings and meetings that were held by opposition members, about Mr. Kelly Mitchell, a paid Tory lobbyist, \$400,000—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Another reminder: When we talk, when we give answers, it’s about government policy, and we stay focused on that and the question as well.

New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Premier. Last week, Alfred Apps, the former president of the Liberal Party, stated under oath in public accounts that he never lobbied your government on behalf of Ornge in any way.

This is the same Alfred Apps who retained your former chief of staff and campaign manager, Don Guy, to advise him and to lobby on behalf of Ornge, and it’s the same Alfred Apps who met with the finance minister’s chief of staff to ask that this government, this Liberal government, tout the successes of Ornge.

Our question is very simple: Has your government redefined lobbying?



**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think the member opposite will be pleased to know that when these issues about potential lobbying were first raised, the Minister of Health's office directly contacted the Integrity Commissioner and offered to support her review of this matter.

I can also report that the Integrity Commissioner has confirmed for us that the recipients of the email that was in question—the two recipients, Ms. Lowe and Mr. Steeve—did absolutely nothing wrong.

I'd also like to point out that it is my understanding, having watched on television the proceedings, that Mr. Apps has suggested that he would like to return to the committee and be asked further questions. This is where these sorts of questions should be dealt with: at the committee—a chance for people to get into the type of detail that the member raises.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Well, it's going to be interesting. I guess Mr. Apps wants to correct the record. He testified that he hired Don Guy, your former chief of staff and election guru, to advise him on the Ornge file. Something doesn't pass the sniff test, Premier. I suppose when we ask Don Guy to come to committee, he'll also deny that he was engaged in lobbying as well. It's going to be interesting to see what the Integrity Commissioner has to say about that.

Premier, what advice did Don Guy provide Alfred Apps when advising and lobbying the Liberals? And, Premier, more importantly, just how far does this corruption extend into your government?

**Hon. John Milloy:** This is starting to become—starting to become? Mr. Speaker, this is outrageous. We are talking about citizens of Ontario who have agreed to go—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Order. Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we're talking about private citizens who have agreed to appear in front of the public accounts committee, and that member is standing up and saying they are guilty until proven innocent. The fact of the matter is, these individuals have agreed to come forward. They will have a chance to answer questions related to Ornge. And the type of drive-by smear that she is undertaking is beneath her.

1100

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance spent the last two weeks wrongly saying that the proposals put forward by New Democrats would add \$1 billion to the deficit. But like magic, the government found money for child care and other priorities. Today, that same minister said that the fiscal projections are much improved. When will this minister stop playing these games?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I thought we were friends.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The Premier says, "I thought we were friends."

Mr. Speaker, I will say this: We did build in contingency in the budget, anticipating that there would be a negotiation, a number of possibilities. This budget did build into the budget of the Ministry of Education additional funding for child care, and we're proud to have put that out. We did build in funding for ODSP. Remember what we said at the time. We wanted to wait for the report that's being handed to the Minister of Community and Social Services. We were pleased to be able to announce that. We also built in money for OW, and I'll remind the member opposite that your caucus didn't ask for that increase. In fact, we were pleased to be able to reach the understanding that we were with the third party; again, unlike the Conservatives—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

One moment. The Attorney General is not being helpful by engaging in comments while the answer is being given; neither is the response to the Attorney General helpful.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This minister changes his numbers more often than most people change their socks. The fact is that this minister's credibility is fading fast. Several economists have suggested that revenue forecasts over the next few years have been intentionally lowballed by this government to justify their reckless cuts. In the months ahead, will we be hearing more surprise good news about these deficit projections from this minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, we will stick to the plan we've outlined, the plan that has been modified as a result of the constructive criticisms and issues put forward by the third party. We also have a number of legislative and statutory requirements on reporting, which we continue to make. I will be presenting additional information on a timely basis. I think the most significant one coming up would be public accounts, likely sometime in August, which—once we have all final information in from last year—will give us a final response with respect to what the deficit was. We do quarterly reports. Because the previous government had left a hidden deficit, we've made a number of changes also to ensure that that kind of hanky-panky with the books can't continue to be played. We should note that accountable, transparent process. We welcome your—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

It really is difficult to try to get people's attention, first of all, when the noise volume is that high, and second of all, when I stand and somebody keeps talking, it's not appropriate.

New question.

## ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, in November you introduced Bill

13, the Accepting Schools Act; and as we know, the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo also introduced a private member's bill, Bill 14, on bullying.

Minister, I voted to pass Bill 14 at second reading because I believe that, as an MPP, I have a duty to work across party lines to help kids in our communities. I believe that putting kids first is more important than politics, and that's why I have been very active in my community with young people, and with other members of this House on this important issue, Speaker. The official opposition has said that they believe in working together, too. Given that, will the minister tell this House and young kids in my community why she hasn't passed anti-bullying legislation yet?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you to the member for Ottawa Centre. Let me recognize and commend the member for being such a strong advocate for anti-bullying initiatives in his community. I know that the member from Ottawa Centre never hesitates to work with people of all political parties for the sake of kids.

There have been many times where this Legislature has come together to help kids. Unfortunately, Bill 13 isn't one of those times. I have said publicly and repeatedly that I want to incorporate over half of the PC anti-bullying bill, Bill 14, into the Accepting Schools Act to make it the strongest possible piece of anti-bullying legislation to protect our kids. That's why the Ontario Liberal Party did not play games with the member from Kitchener–Waterloo's bill. We supported it, because we believe in putting aside partisan politics for the sake of the kids. The PC Party has deliberately and continually stalled Bill 13. That's why I'm calling on the opposition again to support Bill 13.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I appreciate the response of the minister. I agree with the minister that politics should not be a factor when the health and well-being of Ontario kids are at stake. I know the minister believes that, too. That's why she has worked so hard with the MPP—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Now that's—I seriously cannot hear.

Ask your question.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you, Speaker. I know the minister believes that, too. That's why she's worked so hard with the MPP from Kitchener–Waterloo. Unfortunately, the official opposition does not agree. The PC Party has repeatedly said that they want to work with us, but those words do not match their actions, because yesterday they again rang the bells for an hour while we could have been working to help kids. The opposition has chosen—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** First of all, that's not appropriate and it will stop. Second of all, I've asked the member to refrain from heckling.

You will direct your question to government policy, please.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you, Speaker. I just want to highlight the fact that children in my community are concerned that this important bill is not getting passed. I want to ask the minister the steps that she's taking, the efforts she's making to move this legislation forward.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'm very pleased to speak directly to Bill 13 and the fact that I have provided the opposition with amendments to the Accepting Schools Act, drafted in legislative language, which would include more than one half of the provisions of PC Bill 14.

I did this because I believe that we can only fight bullying in Ontario schools if this House stands together. That's why I'm so disappointed in the choices of the Progressive Conservative Party. The opposition has stalled and delayed and rung the bells each and every day we have debated Bill 13 in this House. The Leader of the Opposition has been absent without leadership. He hasn't even stood in this House and debated—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Minister of Health. Last week, Trevor Harness, former member of the Ministry of Health's air ambulance medical air transport centre, expressly stated, "Attempts were made to warn the minister of this growing crisis," but "they were all ignored by the Ministry of Health...." Since 2008, Mr. Harness made several attempts to reach out to the Ministry of Health regarding management and patient safety at Ornge.

Minister, Ontarians were shocked and appalled to learn about the Liberal connections to the corruption at Ornge. What is more disturbing is the blatant lack of oversight by your government that put patients at risk. A former employee reached out to your office, informed you of patient safety issues and was ignored. Why on earth did you fail in the oversight, which put patients at risk?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** As I said again in previous answers, the committee right now is seized with this issue. They are hearing from a robust list of witnesses. There are other witnesses, I know, who are coming forward and who are going to be looking at the whole Ornge situation. The Minister of Health has had a chance to go in front of the committee and explain the actions that she's taken.

But also, just as importantly, the minister has put forward the Ambulance Amendment Act, Bill 50, which responds to many of the concerns that were raised by the Auditor General and other people in front of Ornge.

1110

My question back to the honourable member is: Will he commit here and now, when it receives the leadoff debate on second reading and goes forward—will he confirm here and now that they will not ring bells and waste time and will allow this important piece of legislation,



which addresses the concerns that he's raising, to proceed to committee?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** As soon as they get a select committee, but this question goes back to the Minister of Health.

You've already admitted to prioritizing your election campaign over your ministerial responsibilities. Ontarians want to know why you decided to ignore red flags for up to three years. Was it because you did not want your Liberal goons to get caught, or did you just not want this issue to come to the surface before the election?

Minister, under your watch, patients' lives were put at risk. Corruption spread rampantly throughout Ornge. Why will you not take this opportunity to do the honourable thing and resign?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we've just heard it. I hope everyone heard it. The Auditor General has come forward with recommendations which are to address many of the concerns raised by the member, and he has stood here in the House and said that his party will be blocking the implementations of the Auditor General, implementations that will allow the type of oversight and the type of framework which will allow Ornge to operate effectively as it moves forward. I am disgusted that the honourable member would stand here and admit the fact that his party and the opposition will be blocking an important piece of legislation which is about the health care system in this province.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** This question is for the Premier. Premier, in the budget bill your government has proposed sweeping changes to the Endangered Species Act and to six other environmental protection laws. In doing so, you're evading the public participation provisions that are normally required under the Environmental Bill of Rights. Why is the government preventing full and open debate on these far-reaching changes to this important environmental law?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I'm very pleased to respond to the question. Of course, the Endangered Species Act continues to be a North American leader in protecting native species. Our government remains very committed to the protection and recovery of species at risk and the sustainable use of our resources—certainly also bringing into consideration our socio-economic means.

Indeed, we are proposing some changes to the Endangered Species Act. This is really to respond to the needs of our stakeholders, the people of Ontario, and, may I say, to the species at risk as well. These proposed changes, on which we are now entering an opportunity to have a consultation with all of our stakeholders, will maintain protection for species. They will provide cer-

tainty for industry, which is certainly something that we've heard a great deal about. They could, indeed, also make government services more efficient. We are very, very keen to move forward with this discussion as we maintain our absolute priority in terms of protecting species at risk.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** No environmental stakeholder would have asked for these changes to be made. The budget bill includes far-reaching changes, such as exemptions for industrial activities from requirements to protect wildlife and natural resources, the delegation of government oversight to unspecified bodies, and the extension or elimination of deadlines for species and parks protection.

Ontario's Environmental Commissioner himself has said that using omnibus legislation like Bill 55 to amend environmental laws obstructs the public's right to participate in environmental decision-making. Why won't the government listen to the commissioner and stop hindering public debate by burying this controversial environmental law within the budget bill?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** May I say, this is the furthest thing from burying it. We are very much looking forward to having significant consultation on this process. May I also say that this is about also achieving a balance. We do speak about that a lot, and I think that's an incredibly important part of that.

We certainly acknowledge that we are proposing to spend some more time preparing our recovery strategies, our government response statements and our habitat relations, regulating species at risk and protection/recovery. We believe those extended guidelines will give us the opportunity to consider which species face the greatest risk, the greatest threat, so that we can respond accordingly.

Again, this is truly about us having an opportunity—now that we've got ourselves past the budget motion yesterday—to enter into significant discussions with all our stakeholders, which includes obviously the Environmental Commissioner, whom we're working with very closely, who in fact also said that he thought our process was one that could work.

## WAR OF 1812 BICENTENNIAL

**Mr. Grant Crack:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. As we all know, the War of 1812 bicentennial is fast approaching, and Ontario will have a unique opportunity to showcase its rich heritage while promoting tourism. This historic event will attract not only visitors from this province, but across Canada and the United States. Of course, we're going to want to showcase the best that Ontario has to offer, and this government will need to take steps to welcome local, national and foreign guests and give them the tools needed to experience our unique culture and heritage.

Speaker, through you to the minister, what is this government doing to make it easier to navigate Ontario's many cultural destinations?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Before I turn to the minister, there's far too much conversation going on, even when it's not heckling. It's very difficult. Would you please pay attention to the questions and answers?

Minister.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you, Speaker, for the question. I want to thank the honourable member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell for asking these very, very meaningful questions.

Speaker, the War of 1812 was a big part of our history. It was said it was a war that gave Canada its identity. I recently visited Hamilton's historic Dundurn Castle for the launching of Attractions Ontario's new culture and heritage passport, focusing on the War of 1812 bicentennial, a program which is supported by our government. Speaker, this publication features everything from museums and wineries to coupons that will cut down costs during visits to signature destinations, including the Royal Botanical Gardens and the Stratford Festival.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** It's great to hear that Ontarians, Canadians and foreign visitors will be well-received as a result of this government's initiative. However, the War of 1812 bicentennial is also an occasion to pay tribute to Canadian heroes, requiring the province to work with regional heritage and tourism partners and provide adequate support for ongoing events and initiatives. Speaker, government investment will help Ontarians and visitors commemorate the past, celebrate the present and enjoy a lasting heritage legacy well into the future.

Speaker, through you, can the minister indicate what this government is doing to ensure that the bicentennial receives proper funding and support so that it may be executed successfully?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you, Speaker, again for the question. I want to reassure the member that we are investing over \$32 million in improving and enhancing the War of 1812—Speaker, we have also provided over \$1.7 million to seven regional groups who are planning and developing activities across Ontario. For cultural and heritage projects, we are contributing more than \$1.6 million.

For the Celebrate Ontario 2012-13 program, we are providing over \$400,000 for bicentennial festivals and events throughout the province. We are also supporting initiatives such as multimedia exhibits and educational tools and resources for children in Ontario. Our government looks forward to our very successful War of 1812 bicentennial.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is for the Minister of Health. For several months now, the Minister of Health has pleaded ignorance on the corruption at Ornge. She has provided this House and the public with a long series of excuses and highly suspect explanations on what she knew, when she knew it and how she responded. But,

Speaker, every single one of these lame and pathetic excuses has been refuted.

Alfred Apps, and I quote, said, "The government was thoroughly, painstakingly and, in all cases, truthfully briefed in advance of Ornge taking any of these actions. If the government had" raised even one objection "to anything, I am confident that Ornge would not have proceeded" and perhaps would not become the boondoggle it is.

So I ask the minister, given that you have no credibility and that your excuses have been refuted and that you're responsible for the mess at Ornge, will you do the right thing and resign your position?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, again, there is a committee of the Legislature which is seized with this matter. The minister has had an opportunity to appear in front of the committee. She was asked for an hour; she went for two and a half hours. She talked about the very strong action that she has taken in terms of new leadership at Ornge, the work that she did in terms of forensic auditing, even calling in the police because there was a serious matter there.

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But what's concerning me the most is that the final piece of the puzzle is a very important piece of legislation, Bill 50, which the government is bringing forward. In fact, we've informed the opposition that we want to have second reading leadoff in the next couple of days. This is a bill which encapsulates the very good advice from the Auditor General of Ontario, and the opposition party today has said that they will stand in this House and block that legislation. Mr. Speaker, that is irresponsible—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Again to the Minister of Health: For several months now, the minister has been engaged in a deliberate campaign to confuse the facts and muddy the waters.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would ask the member to withdraw that. That's not appropriate.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Withdraw. Her misinformation has discredited herself and the Premier.

To recap: The minister claimed red flags were raised before; then she claimed they weren't. She claimed to have fired the board, before she explained that she hadn't. She claims to have acted swiftly, before she said she was too busy campaigning. She claims to have been misled but can't name who misled her. She claims to have been uninformed, but clearly wasn't.

The minister continues to make a mockery of this House and her office. So I ask her again, will you take the responsibility for the corruption and compromised patient safety at Ornge and resign?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Government House leader.



**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, if the honourable member wants to hold hearings on the floor of the House, we have all sorts of questions to ask about letters, about briefings, about the role of Mr. Kelly Mitchell, a well-known Progressive Conservative operative who was paid \$400,000—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** But Mr. Speaker, there is—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I am now going to start identifying individuals, and if I get to the point where I give you a warning, the next one is a naming.

**Hon. John Milloy:** There is a much more important issue before this House; that is, this afternoon, we are going to have second reading leadoff on Bill 50, a bill which encapsulates the good advice of the Auditor General of Ontario. We have learned this morning that the official opposition is going to block that bill through their childish bell-ringing and other tricks.

Mr. Speaker, this is the final piece of the puzzle in putting Ornge on its feet, and I am disgusted that they will not stand and support us in that bill.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, and it's going to be kind of a repeat from yesterday's question. His answer yesterday to my question about jobs in North Bay was that it's all about divestment, not foreclosure.

Well, let's make it simple. There's a capable workforce in North Bay with a capable shop, and there's a \$109-million contract up for grabs right now that needs MNDM support—not financial, but they need the ability to be able to bid on that contract, and it's unclear right now if actually the interim board and the minister who appointed the board are allowing the shops to bid on that contract.

The question is simple: Are you supporting jobs in Ontario? Will you allow them to bid on that contract, sir?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I think we said when we announced the divestment that it was business as usual. As we move through the divestment process, it's business as usual. Business as usual should infer to the member that the ONTC is still open for business. And so, as we move down that road, I am sure the board that is in place, the commission that is in place, will look at any type of proposal that is good for the taxpayers of the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Business as usual means actively pursuing contracts, not just looking around. That's business as usual. I run a business. The ONTC is a business. It should run as a business, especially the shops. The shops can be and are a profitable business.

Are you going to allow the board and the shops to actively pursue new business, not just look around?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I don't know how many times we have to say this: Divestment is not foreclosure. There is business as usual. The buses are running. The trains are running. The freight is being hauled. Ontario is in operation.

The reality is, there is a new commission in place. The chief administrative officer is still in place. The chair of the board is still in place. It is business as usual.

#### ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last Friday I attended the launch of the York Region Gift of Life Association. This group was formed because many individuals and families have very serious concerns about the availability of organs and tissue for transplantation here in Ontario. Their loved ones were requiring an organ transplant to save their lives, or they may have received the gift of life themselves. They want care for their loved ones close to where they live and when they need it.

Last June you launched an online organ donor registry in Ontario that gives residents the opportunity to simply go online, with their health card number in hand, to either give their consent or confirm their consent as an organ donor. My constituents would like to know: What kind of impact has the online donor registry had on the number of consenting organ donors there are in the province?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I want to thank the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for this very important question. The remarkable story of Ottawa's Helene Campbell has inspired us all, I think, and has demonstrated how important it is that people are registered as organ donors. She alone has brought thousands of new registrations to beadonor.ca.

Over 80% of Ontarians believe that giving consent to donate organs is an important thing to do, but only 21% of us have in fact registered our consent. We know we can do better. We need to do everything we can to increase the number of people who have registered their consent.

Ontarians can now register online through beadonor.ca. It makes it easier for people to register, it takes only three minutes, and it's absolutely the right thing that all Ontarians should be doing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** The York Region Gift of Life Association knows that when an individual registers to be an organ donor, they can make a difference. I was pleased to learn that the number of yearly organ transplants in Ontario has increased by 53% since 2003. However, there's more to do in order to maximize organ and tissue donations to increase life-saving transplants. The demand for organ transplantation is increasing due to technological and pharmacological advances, the aging population and the increasing incidence of end-stage organ disease.

Recently, I've taken up a challenge that you issued to see which community can register the most organ donors. I currently have a registration page on Trillium Gift of

Life's website, and I have issued a press release to my community. I look forward to continuing this advocacy.

To the minister: What other initiative does your ministry have to help the work of groups like the York Region Gift of Life Association?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The sad reality is that every three days in Ontario, someone dies waiting for an organ transplant, so we need to do better. The math is simple. Every donation can save up to eight lives, so we need more people to register, to improve the odds for the people who are waiting for that precious organ transplant.

The Gift of 8 Movement is one more way to get the word out and to encourage our friends and our families to register their consent. I've joined the Gift of 8 Movement. I know that many of my colleagues, including the Premier, have joined the Gift of 8 Movement as well. We have a donor registration page. I've set a personal goal of getting 1,000 more people registering, visiting that website.

By working together, by members from all sides of this House joining together, I know we can get more people registered as organ donors.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Premier. It has been revealed that the former president of the Liberal Party, Alfred Apps, lobbied the government on behalf of Ornge to set up meetings to brief the Ministry of Health and others. This was confirmed by the Integrity Commissioner in letters to Mr. Apps. The purpose of these briefings was to inform your government of Ornge's plan to establish new, for-profit business ventures beyond their core mandate. Apps was proposing a resolution on behalf of Ornge to get permission from the government to make final decisions without the government's approval.

Premier, in the real world, when you fail to do your job, you lose your job. Your minister has failed to do her job. Will you finally call a select committee on Ornge and fire the minister?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

1130

**Hon. John Milloy:** I've had an opportunity already to address the issue of Mr. Apps and lobbying and put it on the record. At the same time, I think the member has to be aware that there is a committee of the Legislature which is looking into the Ornge situation, that the Minister of Health went in front of and spoke about the changes that she's taken due to what is, quite frankly, unacceptable action there at Ornge. We have a new, stronger performance agreement, which gives the government new powers to oversee financial affairs. She's replaced the board and senior leadership. She, in fact, unfortunately, had to call in the OPP, which is undertaking an investigation.

The final piece of the puzzle, though, is Bill 50, which will be before the Legislature this afternoon for second

reading leadoff. It is a bill which reflects the advice of the Auditor General. I ask the member: Will he stand in his place and support it or ring bells?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the Premier: The fact that the subject matter—it should have raised flags, what they were requesting to do. You were being told that Ornge was expanding beyond its main mandate, and either you blatantly accepted the information being provided or you failed to do your job and ask appropriate questions. You seemed to be only too happy to hear what you wanted to hear.

Premier, why was the reassurance from the former Liberal Party president all that was necessary for your government to forfeit oversight on Ornge?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, if the honourable member wants to hold a hearing, some sort of kangaroo court, here on the floor of the House, we have plenty of questions over here. Mr. Speaker, we have information about briefings they received, long meetings that were arranged. This individual, Kelly Mitchell, was paid \$400,000 to lobby them.

But I think the more important issue is that we took the advice of the Auditor General seriously, Mr. Speaker. This is a very serious matter and we have encapsulated that in legislation, which will be before this Legislature, and what we have heard from the opposition this afternoon is that they are going to continue to block that legislation. They are going to ring bells and they are going to make sure that the Auditor General's advice is not passed through legislation. That is disrespectful to the Auditor General and to this Legislature.

#### FERRY SERVICE

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, for weeks, both ferries in Pelee Island have been in dry dock undergoing maintenance work at the same time. Now islanders are being told that it could be another three weeks before service is restored. With an early spring and good prices, a potential \$3.3-million soybean crop could be lost because farmers can't get their seed to the island. Interim transportation measures were outlined by islanders and by my office in a letter to your ministry, yet we've seen no government action as business continued to lose money daily. Will your ministry do its duty and intervene today to find an immediate solution for transportation to and from Pelee Island?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I thank the member for the question. We're very familiar with the issue, and we're on the file. I share the concern that the ferry service will be out for two and a half weeks, but we have a responsibility to the people who use that service to ensure that it is as safe as absolutely possible. We have been in touch with the mayor, and we've heard of what his potential solutions are, and we will remain in contact with him. But we will not compromise when it comes to safety. If the ferry has



to be dry-docked for two and a half weeks to ensure that safety, then that is what will be done.

In the meantime, the island will be served by aircraft, as it is in the winter months. I understand this is an inconvenience for some, but I want to reiterate that this is a temporary measure. We're on the file. We're doing everything possible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you for the response, Minister. We can all appreciate the need for safety in our transportation system, yet the only two ferries to the island are not only undergoing scheduled maintenance at the same time, but they're undergoing work in the busiest season. In the early spring, with good weather, the delay can cost businesses up to half a million dollars in just a few days. The two vessels are old and your ministry knew that the five-year inspection was coming up. Can the ministry assure us that a review of the scheduled maintenance process will be undertaken to ensure that repairs are made in the winter, when it makes sense, and that it mitigates the impact to businesses on the island?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I thank the member for the question. I'm sure he understands that safety is our first priority. It's an unfortunate circumstance that the ferry will be out of service for the next two and a half weeks for repairs. The island will not be cut off for that period of time. As I mentioned, aircraft will provide service for all people and critical freight. Crews are working to make the necessary repairs to the ferry so it can be back into service as quickly as possible while ensuring the service is as safe as possible. My staff has been in touch with the mayor of Pelee Island, as I said, to keep him apprised of the situation. I agree the situation is not an ideal one, but it is a temporary one which people are working very hard to resolve. We're happy to provide updates to the member as they arise.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. Only the Ontario Liberal Party has a plan to balance the budget by 2017-18 while protecting services for families. The government has a plan to balance the budget by 2017-18 while protecting the services families rely on. The government is looking at various ways to meet this goal.

One of the ways that we can ensure that the targets are met is to find savings from government operations. It is estimated that savings of \$4.9 billion can be realized from eliminating overlap and duplication, implementing more efficient delivery models and focusing on core business. The government's ServiceOntario initiative has yielded excellent results since 2003.

In order to see increased savings, the budget has proposed expanding the use of the delegated administrative authority model across government to make public services more efficient and more accountable. As the minister who provides oversight to eight DAAs, can you

please provide more information on what they are and how they function?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I would like to thank the member from Ottawa-Orléans for the question and also for his diligent work on behalf of his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly pleased to speak about the delegated administrative authority model. This is an effective and efficient model for delivery which has been working in a very efficient manner in meeting the MCS's mandate of protecting consumers and ensuring public safety. Delegated administrative authorities are self-financing, not-for-profit corporations which operate at arm's length from government. They are entirely self-funded. The government retains overall accountability for DAAs and maintains oversight through various accountability mechanisms. Some examples of the delegated administrative authorities under my ministry include OMVIC, the Real Estate Council of Ontario and the Travel Industry Council of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order from the member from Newmarket-Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Thank you, Speaker. My point of order relates to comments that were made earlier today about a witness who appeared before the public accounts committee. My colleague put a specific question regarding one of those witnesses and quoted him. One of the members of that committee, the member for Willowdale, specifically—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do not see a point of order here, and if you have a point to make, make it quickly because what you've done right now is not told me there's a point of order here.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, my point is simply this: that the member from Willowdale on three different occasions referred to that witness as being "crazy." That is demeaning—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That is not a point of order. Thank you.

The member from Sarnia-Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to, on a point of order, invite all the members in the House down to the Sarnia-Lambton reception today, rooms 228 and 230. Everyone's welcome. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That too is not a point of order, but we do invite everyone to join the hospitality of the member from Sarnia-Lambton.

Point of order from the member from Simcoe-Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, in response to a question about Ornge and public accounts, the government House leader referred to this place, the Parliament of Ontario, as a "kangaroo court." Perhaps he would like to correct the record and apologize to this House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That, again, is not a point of order. All members have the opportunity to correct their own answer.

This House stands recessed until 3 pm this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## PROVINCIAL DEBT

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Yesterday afternoon, I listened to Premier McGuinty being interviewed on CFRB. He said that the NDP had forced him to agree to the new surtax on high-income earners. He also said that the new surtax would reduce the deficit, and he stated it would be eliminated after the budget is balanced. A fair-minded person would conclude from this that the Premier has a long-term fiscal plan—at least, in his mind—that includes what should be done after the budget is balanced.

Last Thursday, Liberal MPPs voted against my motion, which was a modest proposal speaking to a larger principle: my belief that after the budget is balanced, the government should start making a serious effort to pay down the accumulated provincial debt.

Since the Premier appears to be making plans for what needs to be done when the budget is finally balanced, how can the Liberal members suggest that talk of a debt repayment plan is premature, as they asserted last Thursday? Or is it just that any talk of paying down the debt repels the Liberals and makes them run the other way? Is it that they've added so much to the provincial debt that they are oblivious and couldn't get their heads out of the sand if they wanted to? Or is it that they know that their record of uncontrolled spending will eventually defeat them?

Maybe my motion struck a raw nerve, but as long as I'm in this House, I want to speak for the future generations of Ontarians who should not have to pay for Premier McGuinty's profligacy.

## ST. JOHN THE COMPASSIONATE MISSION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** St. John the Compassionate Mission, a charitable organization in my riding, provides a free meal program and supports a wide range of programs for marginalized and vulnerable individuals in a community setting. They operate a wholesale bakery and thrift shop, to provide dignity, work experience and training for men and women, many of whom are homeless or on social assistance.

They are asking that the Ontario Works program that allows recipients an additional \$100 month if they volunteer, with the intention to assist in preparation for the workforce, be extended permanently to recipients who, for a variety of reasons, will never be able to return to the workforce.

It's our responsibility to ensure that vulnerable individuals on Ontario Works, who may not be able to participate in the workforce, have access to additional income and supports. By these means, we allow them to participate in their communities in a volunteer capacity. This often gives great meaning to their lives.

Speaker, we should support the initiative of St. John the Compassionate Mission and ensure that meaning is

not taken away from the lives of those who are far less fortunate than those of us in this chamber.

THUNDER BAY  
REGIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thunder Bay's economy, currently with a very low unemployment rate of 5.2%, continues to grow and diversify, creating jobs that were never before seen in our community, as our knowledge-based economy expands.

Last week, we announced \$1 million from our Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, for a hyperpolarized gas MRI, a technology that overcomes the limitations of a conventional MRI.

With this funding, we have successfully recruited Dr. Mitch Albert, a research chair and professor of chemistry and a world-class scientist, to our community. Dr. Albert co-invented the hyperpolarized MRI that will improve imaging and treatment for asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, pulmonary embolism, lung cancer, strokes, atherosclerosis and diseases of the brain.

I'm very excited about the growth of Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute, a research institute our government helped establish with a \$15-million grant several years ago.

Investments like last week's in world-class research in Thunder Bay will lead to better health outcomes for many, add to the over 100 new, knowledge-based jobs at Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute, as they move forward with their goal of 200 jobs, and continue the growth of the new knowledge-based economy in Thunder Bay.

## ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Every three days, one person in Ontario dies while waiting for an organ transplant because there aren't enough registered donors. That's according to the Ontario Trillium Gift of Life Network. I'm told that 229 Canadians died while waiting for an organ in 2010. In that same year, 135 people needed a new heart, and 22 people died waiting for one.

My uncle Arnold Duncan was one of the lucky ones. His heart transplant extended his life by 10 years. His organ donor was a 15-year-old girl who, tragically, was killed in a bicycle accident. Our family will be forever grateful for her donation.

I also want to mention Perth county resident Henry Stevens. Mr. Stevens recently underwent a double lung transplant. His inspiring story is highlighted this week in our local media.

However, it seems that for every success story, there is another story about someone who didn't receive the organs they so desperately needed.

We know that everyone is a potential organ donor and tissue donor, no matter their age or health. We know that



most religions support organ and tissue donation. And we know that a decision to donate can provide immediate comfort and consolation for those mourning the death of a loved one.

This is National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week. I want to express my support for organ donation, and that of all my constituents who care about this issue. I also want to congratulate my colleague the member from Northumberland—Quinte West for introducing a bill that would have a major impact on organ donation rates.

### JOB CREATION

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Today I rise to speak of the job losses that have once again been felt by US Steel in Hamilton. The company, after locking out 622 workers for 11 months, has now laid off 50 workers as of April 28.

The decision to not restart the blast furnace will mean that US Steel, once a giant in the industry and the largest employer in the Hamilton region, can only process steel that is made elsewhere.

This is disturbing, Mr. Speaker. The city of Hamilton and the people of Hamilton Mountain cannot afford to lose any more jobs. The food bank in my riding is facing a 30% increase over this time last year. Everyday people are finding it harder and harder to get by.

The NDP campaigned with a job creation platform, and we convinced the government to task the jobs and prosperity fund to examine our job creator tax credit. I urge the government to pay serious attention to this proposal, and when they do, to make sure they include firm job guarantees with penalties and clawback provisions if those guarantees are not met.

Workers across Ontario, including those at US Steel, are well aware of what happens when money is handed over to profitable corporations without commitments and consequences for breaking those commitments.

### JEFF CREWE

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I am honoured to rise in the House today to commend a teacher at Weston Collegiate Institute in York—South Weston who saved a student's life last Friday morning.

During his physical education class, teacher Jeff Crewe was alerted that a student had collapsed. Eighteen-year-old Ajethan Ramachandranathan had no history of a heart or lung condition. A student teacher, Jessica Sung, rushed over to fetch the defibrillator. By the time Mr. Crewe rolled Ajethan into the recovery position, he had stopped breathing. Mr. Crewe reacted quickly and used the defibrillator. The paramedics arrived soon after, and Ajethan is now recovering.

This story highlights the importance of defibrillator training in our schools, and it also highlights the importance of having defibrillators in public settings. Only last June, the Premier jointly announced with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario the government's commitment of \$10 million to place automated external

defibrillators in public access settings such as hockey arenas, recreation centres and high-activity schools.

But, Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, Ajethan's story highlights the actions of Jeff Crewe. I know our teachers play many roles in our communities, and I would like to thank Mr. Crewe for being both an educator and a hero.

1510

### KINETIC KNIGHTS

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I rise today to recognize the Kincardine District Secondary School Kinetic Knights Team 781. They're off to the world championship robotics competition in St. Louis, Missouri, this coming weekend.

Team 781 is a high school team that won gold at the Queen City Regional in Cincinnati, qualifying for the world championships. Last year, the Kinetic Knights came in second at the worlds.

The main part of a robotics team is to build a robot and compete with it. However, they promote themselves as a team that anyone with any skill set can be part of. The team is split into two sections: administration, marketing; and building. Within each section there are different branches, each led by a particular student nominated by the team.

In January, the team gathers to watch a live stream which marks the first day of build season, as they learn what the challenge is for that year. After that, they spend six weeks designing, building and programming the robot. After six weeks, they send it in for review, and they're no longer allowed to touch that robot until the first regional competition.

This year, they had to build a robotic structure that could shoot basketball hoops. And they are also judged on how well they work with other teams; for example, assisting with repairs.

I have had the opportunity to attend the Kinetic Knights open house this past year, and I join many people from the community who are proud of this team: community mentors, coaches, teachers and family members. I wish them the best of luck as the world championships starts tomorrow.

### MARIA TOORPAKAI WAZIR

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It was only a few weeks ago that I heard about Maria Toorpakai Wazir. Maria is a native of Pakistan's South Waziristan, which is near the Afghan border and also one of Pakistan's most tribal and repressive areas. South Waziristan is known for its severe, oppressive attitude towards women. Girls rarely go to school and women are often confined to the four walls of their home.

Maria was a talented squash player and athlete, but due to the sexism in her native country, she was not allowed to engage in sports. Her father disguised her as a boy in order to train; however, she was soon discovered and her father began receiving death threats from the Taliban.

Maria eventually fled to Canada and is now set to become the number one female squash player in the world. She wants to prove that women can do anything. Her passion is to end the sexist mindset of people in her country and across the Middle East. She has been training under Canada's former number-one-ranked squash player, Jonathan Power.

On May 2, a fundraiser is taking place to help Maria raise funds for her foundation; 100% of the ticket proceeds will go directly to Maria's foundation, which will work to build training centres across the Middle East where women can play sports and have access to education.

For more information, I ask all members to contact my office. I hope to see a great representation from members of this Legislature at that fundraiser. Thank you.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I'm pleased today to highlight the tremendous progress we've made in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie with respect to access to primary care.

Since 2003, we've made significant investments, including a 64% increase in health care funding; a 38% increase in medical school training spaces; we've opened the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, the first medical school to be opened in Canada in over 30 years; we've developed a new northern and rural recruitment and retention initiative; and we've increased nurse practitioner training spaces by 135%.

Clearly, the results in our ridings speak for themselves. Since opening in 2011, the NP clinic in the Soo has registered nearly 1,000 patients and is continually increasing their patient roster. Since opening in 2011, the Superior Family Health Team in Sault Ste. Marie has added two new doctors to its team and taken on over 5,000 patients, with 2,000 being added in the year ahead. It's estimated that we're now within two years of every resident having access to a doctor or nurse practitioner.

Through innovative programs such as Health Care Connect and new service delivery models like NP clinics and family health teams, we're helping more people find and connect with primary care providers.

As a government, we'll continue to develop health care strategies that ensure people have access to care when and where they need it. That's why, in our budget, we've committed to increase funding for home care and community health services by an additional \$526 million a year.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### PROPERTY OWNERS' PROTECTION ACT, 2012

##### LOI DE 2012 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES FONCIERS

Mr. Marchese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 72, An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998 and other Acts to increase protection for property owners / *Projet de loi 72, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums et d'autres lois pour accroître la protection des propriétaires fonciers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I beg your indulgence and the indulgence of everyone here, but I will be reading from the explanatory note, and it's a bit long.

The bill amends the Condominium Act, 1998, the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and the Building Code Act, 1992.

The amendments to the Condominium Act, 1998, include the following:

(1) Every declaration registered under the act is required to contain the materials, information, consents and standard provisions set out in the regulations.

(2) The qualifications and grounds for disqualification of directors of a condominium corporation are expanded with respect to affiliations between directors and declarants.

(3) All voting by owners is on the basis of one vote per owner, rather than on the basis of one vote per unit.

(4) It is an offence to provide false or misleading statements in respect of an appointment of a proxy.

(5) Several new requirements are imposed in respect of the disclosure statement.

(6) A declarant is prohibited from transferring a residential unit unless the unit and specified common elements meet the prescribed standards.

(7) The declarant is accountable to the corporation for the budget statement that covers a three-year period rather than a one-year period.

(8) A person who acts as a property manager under an agreement for the management of a property owned by a corporation is required to have prescribed qualifications.

(9) A corporation is permitted to access its reserve fund for the additional purposes of installing renewable energy and other energy-efficient technologies and replacing common elements following reasonable wear and tear.

(10) If a corporation carries out work for the purpose of the installation of renewable energy technologies or other energy-efficient technologies, the work shall be deemed not to be an addition, alteration or improvement to the common elements or a change in the assets of the corporation.

(11) A review board is established. Various functions that are currently functions of the Superior Court of Justice are assigned to the review board instead.

(12) A duty of fair dealing is imposed on all declarants and condominium corporations in their dealings with owners and purchasers of condominium units.



The amendments to the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act include the following:

(1) The definition of “home” is amended to include units in conversion condominiums.

(2) Consumer protection is added to the objects of the corporation, and new requirements are added with respect to the composition of the board of the corporation.

(3) The registrar is required to publish information on the Internet regarding previous business names of builders of condominium dwelling units and associated builders. Requirements are also imposed in respect of the disclosure of this information.

(4) Warranties in respect of specified matters in condominiums are extended from one year to five years.

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(5) The corporation is required to complete its efforts to effect conciliation within the prescribed time.

The Building Code Act, 1992, is amended to require the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to ensure that a review is conducted and a report prepared in respect of noise protection standards for properties owned by condominium corporations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do want to take a moment to explain two things. Number one, it is the tradition that you read the explanatory note, which is usually very short, introducing a bill, and that’s where we get the idea of a short statement. This particular explanatory note was very lengthy, so I was telling the member that I would tolerate that—except to say, let’s not make that the practice. It was called a filibuster in the old days, but we won’t do that.

Having said, that, I wanted to bring clarity to make sure everyone understands that the normal practice is to read the explanatory note only, and the member did so.

#### ENDANGERED SPECIES AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES ESPÈCES EN VOIE DE DISPARITION

Ms. Scott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Endangered Species Act, 2007 / *Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les espèces en voie de disparition.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** How short is short?

Over the past few months, we’ve been consulting with a wide range of stakeholders in agriculture, forestry, aggregate extraction, hunting, fishing and land development, as well as private citizens and consultants in the natural resources field. We’ve consistently heard that the

Endangered Species Act needs to broaden its scope of analysis to consider the impact which a decision or proposal may have on the lives and operations of individuals as well as businesses. This bill attempts to address some of the underlying causes of that concern.

I can say that this is a much shorter statement than the explanatory note, Mr. Speaker, so I’ll let you off the hook.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I accept that as a friendly comment.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### NATIONAL VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARENESS WEEK

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I rise in the House today to speak about a very significant event that’s taking place right now both here in Ontario and across Canada. That is National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. It’s an opportunity to raise awareness about victim issues and about the laws, programs and services in place to help victims of crimes and their families. The national theme for this week is “Moving Forward,” which recognizes that supports for victims that meet their needs in the aftermath of a violent crime are extremely valuable.

If any of you has ever known or listened to a victim of violent crime, you may have heard them describe the process of recovery as a journey. Every journey is unique. No two people will experience it the same way.

For people going through it, the thought of not knowing how long recovery will take or if they will be able to pick up where they left off can be frightening. Individual journeys vary from person to person. Recovery can take months, years or even a lifetime. Some people never fully recover.

Many suffer intense trauma that may take them down a road of mental health challenges and addiction issues. They may require hours of specialized therapy and much-needed medical, personal and financial support. Personal and family relationships can suffer, sometimes severely. The fact is that victimization can often be a life-altering experience.

Moving forward together has a special significance for Ontario because of the work that we do to help people during these pivotal times—and it wasn’t always like that. This work includes delivering innovative support services and making it easier for victims and families to seek the justice that they deserve.

Yesterday, I and a number of our colleagues from across the aisle as well as from this side of the House had the honour of presenting the Victim Services Awards of Distinction. Thirteen such awards were presented. These annual awards, which started four years ago, recognize the exemplary efforts of those who serve and support victims of crime on a daily basis. Some are themselves

victims who, through dedication and courage, have contributed to victim services as survivors, leaders and role models. We heard from a youngster, Speaker, just in high school, who is now helping other victims overcome the trauma.

Award winners have made great strides in tackling problems such as bullying, domestic violence and Internet child exploitation, and all of their stories are truly inspiring. Not only are we recognizing some outstanding individuals, but this event also helps raise the profile of the network of programs and services that are available in communities across this province.

The fact is that victim services provide valuable assistance—services like victim crisis assistance and referral services, or VCARS, as it's commonly known. Working closely with the local police, VCARS staff and volunteers help victims and provide much-needed support, whether it's immediate emotional support, calling a relative on their behalf, providing a reference to a local counselling service or simply giving them a safe ride home. It is small acts like these that can be enormously important to a victim during a time of personal crisis. Last year, VCARS helped over 71,000 of our neighbours, friends and loved ones in this province. I'm proud to say that Ontario has supported VCARS for many years—and will continue in our commitment to its vital work.

Being a victim or losing a loved one to violent crime is not anything that anyone plans for, and in the days immediately following a crime, many victims are unprepared to deal with the short-term expenses that can result, even things, at times, like funeral costs. Four years ago, this government began a pilot program to provide emergency funds to those who need it most. That was our Victim Quick Response Program, which continues to provide that vital support for victims and families today.

Of course, our work doesn't end there. Victims and families often find themselves in court, and it is here that a number of other services and supports are provided. Among these are the Victim/Witness Assistance Program, which for 23 years has worked to ensure that vulnerable victims have the support they need to participate in the criminal court process, and that's so often vital for them.

More recently, we launched the Family Court Support Worker Program, which helps victims of domestic violence who are involved in the Family Court process. These services are now being delivered province-wide and will help victims, often women in abusive relationships, better understand their role in the Family Court and how to keep themselves and their children safe during the court process.

In the immediate aftermath of crime, and at every step along the road to recovery, it is critically important that victims and their families have someone to walk the journey with them—somewhere to turn to in their time of greatest need. Together with our many numerous partners in communities across this province, we are committed to ensuring that the right programs and services are in place so that the most vulnerable people in our society are

cared for. And, as our communities are ever-changing, this network of supports will continually adapt to meet the specific needs of victims.

This week, I encourage all members to join me in thinking about the needs of victims in our communities and in recognizing the dedicated individuals and organizations who help victims every day, every step of the way, to help them heal, grow and truly move forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?**

**1530**

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** It's a privilege to rise in the House today and speak about the importance of Victims of Crime Awareness Week on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus. This year's awareness week focuses on moving forward and highlights three key issues surrounding victims of crime and the government's responsibility to those victims. The first is ensuring that victims are treated with compassion and respect as they move through their unique healing process. The second is making sure that victims have an effective voice in the criminal justice and correction system. Finally, number three, is recognizing and ensuring that victim services—those dedicated individuals who help victims of crime through their most difficult time—have the tools they need to help victims move through their experience and move forward to rebuild their lives.

Mr. Speaker, it's always been central to the Progressive Conservative Party to take crime seriously and to deal with it wherever it may be, swiftly and strongly. And we continue to be steadfast in our support of those who have suffered from injustice. We view this week as an opportunity to progress support for victims of crime and to do everything we can as legislators to facilitate a victim's emotional recovery as well as their physical healing.

It's also a time to be able to focus on some of the amazing services that provide support to victims in our communities. I was present at the ceremony that the Attorney General spoke about, which took place here at Queen's Park yesterday and presented the Victim Services Awards of Distinction.

I'd like to take just a moment to speak about two such organizations in the region of Durham, one of which won an award of distinction yesterday. Ms. Tammy Rankin from the Durham Elder Abuse Network won one of the provincial awards, and I was very happy to be there when Ms. Rankin was presented with it. The mission of the Elder Abuse Network is to be leaders in the development of an integrated and collaborative strategy to address the prevention of elder abuse in Durham region through networking, information sharing, raising awareness and advocacy. I can say that I've personally had the opportunity to call on Ms. Rankin's services in my community office on more than one occasion, and she's always been very quick to respond and provide support, and to investigate where needed. So it's a valuable service in our community, and I certainly commend that.

The other one I'd like to mention—although there are many in Durham region, I don't have time to mention all



of them—is called DRIVEN, Durham Region's Intimate-relationship Violence Empowerment Network. It's a group of organizations that have come together to provide support for victims of domestic abuse. They are providing service on a very small budget, but they are very effective in providing support to victims in our community.

So I salute all the people across Durham region, and indeed across the province, who provide support to victims. We should support them and provide them with acknowledgment and encouragement in the work they continue to do on our behalf. Thank you.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** On behalf of the New Democratic Party of Ontario, I also rise to recognize National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. It's a very important initiative, and it gives us time to reflect on the concerns and the issues surrounding those who are victims of crime.

As noted by the member from Whitby—Oshawa, there is one theme, “Moving Forward,” and in that one theme there are three categories involving victims being treated with compassion, that they have an effective voice and that the victim services are provided with the tools that they require.

I also acknowledge the Attorney General's acknowledgment of the various community services that do exist that are providing excellent service, including the victim crisis assistance and referral services, the Victim Quick Response Program as well as the Victim/Witness Assistance Program which exist in courthouses across Ontario and the Family Court support workers.

In addition, when we talk about the theme “Moving Forward,” we need to look at, or turn our minds to, some of the issues that victims face. One of the issues that is raised in the theme “Moving Forward,” and one of the ways we can move forward with greater rights or recognition of victim's rights is that victims really need to have a voice. Victims are provided with an opportunity to have a victim impact statement when they are in court. But beyond that, there are other strategies which need to be implemented to provide victims with a greater voice.

There are strategies which exist in other jurisdictions, and I would like to share some of these ideas with the House. Some of these include round tables with the victim and the individual who perpetrated the crime or who was the guilty party. Round-table discussions and reconciliation and healing circles are also another strategy so the victim can be face to face with the perpetrator or the guilty party so they can truly heal and truly discover the root causes of these issues.

Counselling services are essential, so that victims are provided with effective means and effective strategies to address their issues that flow from being the victim of a crime.

In addition, victims of crime should have an active voice in the sentencing and in the repercussions of crime. I can give you an example of a client I once had, who was in an altercation with his brother. Police were called, and the brother did not want any charges laid against his

brother. They were two brothers. They had simply engaged in an argument, and it had gotten a little bit physical, but there were no injuries and there was no damage to property. There was simply some yelling and some aggressive pushing back and forth.

The police were called, and the brother made it very clear that he did not want his sibling charged. He did not want any police interference. However, what happened was that the brother, who again did not cause any injury and did not damage any property, was charged with assault and with possessing a dangerous weapon, and was put into custody, subjected to a bail hearing and later released to live with his brother.

The brother indicated that this was a complete upset of the family—they had a long-standing close relationship. This was an example where, as a victim, there was no voice. There was no input that was recognized.

There are many circumstances like this where victims aren't given a strong voice in determining how the procedure should unfold. For example, there are a number of women I've had the opportunity of speaking with who would like interference from the state but don't want the criminal justice system. They want an alternative system that addresses some of the issues that may occur in their home, which may involve not exactly violence but improper circumstances in the home where they need some sort of avenue. They want to contact a resource to assist them in the dispute that's occurring in their homes, but they don't want to have their loved one put in jail.

Alternatives need to be put in place so that victims truly have a voice so they can choose the avenue by which the state interferes, they can choose the avenue by which they are assisted, so that we can have true recognition of the rights of victims so they can have input in the way their lives unfold and the way that conflicts are resolved.

In addition, there are many silent victims who don't have a voice, who aren't recognized, who aren't able to access the resources that are available, who don't feel comfortable, whether it's due to language barriers or whether it's due to financial barriers, to access or communicate with people in power or the authorities to make sure their rights are protected. We need to ensure that those who are poor, women and children have these rights available to them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

## PETITIONS

### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act.

“Whereas Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act, by identifying only four specific groups and using primarily

homosexual and gender issue bullying examples, provides a narrow focus to the bullying issue; and

"Whereas this should not be a legislation designed to appease a special interest group or address a narrow political agenda; and

"Whereas it has not been proven that the special-status clubs will lead to a more inclusive environment; and

"Whereas the legislation will result in curriculum that may be in conflict with the values of various faith families; and

"Whereas the legislation, as stated by the Minister of Education (Laurel Broten) during her speech at second reading, is intended to 'change the attitudes of society' rather than addressing the wrongful actions of the bully; and

"Whereas churches and traditional-principled schools renting publicly funded school facilities would be forced to abide by an undefined 'provincial code of conduct' which could be in opposition to their 'constitutionally protected faith'; and

"Whereas the legislation will interfere with the right of Catholics to create an education environment that is consistent with their faith;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend Bill 13 to address these issues:

"Broaden the legislation to uphold the worth of all children who may be bullied for all reasons;

**1540**

"Send the message that the bully's actions are wrong for any reason, regardless of why they target the victim;

"Require tenants renting public school facilities to follow federal and provincial laws, rather than an undefined provincial code of conduct;

"Require school boards to respect the federally protected rights of all faith groups, as children from these groups are often bullied by their peers, the community and the governments;

"Remove references to the formation of specific clubs for certain groups (these clubs are not proven to lead to a more equitable environment) and place the emphasis on correcting the wrongful actions of the bullies;

"Include statements protecting the rights of all people, including the religious rights of individuals and groups—a segment of society that is often bullied because of its convictions;

"Ensure accommodation for any child whose parent identifies the curriculum to be in conflict with the values taught at home."

I affix my signature to this and I present to page Katarina.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas currently the law takes the onus off of owners that raise violent dogs by making it appear that violence is a matter of genetics; and

"Whereas the Dog Owners' Liability Act does not clearly define a pit bull, nor is it enforced equally across the province, as pit bulls are not an acknowledged breed;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly passes Bill 16, Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, into law."

I agree with this—and the thousands of others that are about to come—sign my name, and I'm going to give it to Safa to deliver to the table.

#### RADIATION SAFETY

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act authorizes podiatrists to take and prescribe radiographs; and

"Whereas we are aware of the extent to which the act and the regulations have fallen behind technology;

"I, as president and on behalf of the Ontario Podiatric Medical Association, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To express support for the motion filed on April 17, 2012, by the member from Richmond Hill that asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations and make recommendations on how to modernize this act, and bring it to 21st-century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and the public and to include all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes."

I fully agree with this petition. I will sign it and pass it on to page Ranbir.

#### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas it has been recommended in the Drummond report that all demonstration schools in Ontario be closed as part of the upcoming budget, we seek your opposition to this move.

"We, the undersigned Trillium, Sagonska and Amethyst demonstration school parent councils, on behalf of our students, parents and interested parties, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(a) to oppose this recommendation of demonstration school closures becoming part of the upcoming budget (a strictly cost-cutting measure which does not take into account the resulting high costs at school board level to provide same service types to severely learning-disabled students);

"(b) actively move to enable these valuable schools to remain in place to serve students who have exhausted all other available resources in order to access equal



education for themselves without added costs, to which they, like all students, are entitled by the law of the land, by opposing the closure of demonstration schools;

“(c) actively move to enable the continuation of the added role of demonstration schools as frontrunner providers of direction for technology use in schools, literacy development and curriculum delivery, by opposing the closure of demonstration schools.”

I agree with this, will affix my signature and send it down with Shanice.

### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers have been paying over millions in extra charges on their hydro bills to help retire the debt. The amount collected to date as per the Auditor General’s report is \$8.7 billion, but the amount owing was \$7.8 billion;

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers are asking, where is the money being invested?

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers are asking why this was not addressed at the time the debt was paid;

“Whereas electrical rates have increased with the new creation of green energy coming online to include solar and wind, refurbishment of nuclear plants and deregulation of Hydro One;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows to obtain answers to the following questions:

“How much of the debt remains?

“When will it be eliminated from Ontario taxpayers’ hydro bills?”

I agree with this petition, and I will be presenting it to page William.

### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition from Scarborough—Agincourt, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which states:

“Whereas creating a safe and positive learning environment is an essential part of helping students succeed in school;

“Whereas bullying, homophobia and gender-based violence are unacceptable;

“Whereas we need to do more than just tell bullied kids it gets better—we need to work together to make it better now;

“Whereas the Accepting Schools Act would, if passed, help to end bullying in our schools;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the elected members of all parties help make our schools safer and more inclusive by supporting the Accepting Schools Act.”

I certainly support this petition and affix my signature, and send it with page Sabrina.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition signed by a great many of my constituents.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Tavistock’s Bonnie Brae Health Care Centre is an 80-bed, D-class nursing home that must be either rebuilt or closed by July 2014; and

“Whereas there is currently an application by a private operator to move the 80 licensed beds outside of Oxford county to the city of London, despite the recent opening of two other long-term-care homes in Middlesex county in 2010; and

“Whereas long-term-care wait times in Oxford county can be as much as 134 days longer than in Middlesex county; and

“Whereas Tavistock receives referrals from the nearby Waterloo Wellington CCAC, which has among the highest waits for long-term care in the province;

“We, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario retain these beds in Tavistock and seek partners to fast-track replacement of the Bonnie Brae as part of Ontario’s 10-year plan to modernize 35,000 long-term-care beds.”

I affix my signature, as I agree with it, Mr. Speaker, and we thank you very much for the opportunity to present it.

### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas currently the law takes the onus off of owners that raise violent dogs by making it appear that violence is a matter of genetics; and

“Whereas the Dog Owners’ Liability Act does not clearly define a pit bull, nor is it enforced equally across the province, as pit bulls are not an acknowledged breed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly passes Bill 16, Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, into law.”

I’ll give it to Shanice—I of course agree—and she’ll deliver it to the table.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario from the people of Avalon school district in my riding.

“To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas the current enrolment of Avalon Public School is 687 students;

“Whereas the student capacity of the school is 495 students, as determined by the Ministry of Education’s own occupancy formula;

“Whereas the issue of overcrowding and lack of space makes it impossible for Avalon Public School to offer

full-day kindergarten until the overcrowding issue is" resolved;

"Whereas Avalon Public School is located in a high-growth community;

"Whereas the enrolment at Avalon Public School is expected to continue rising at a rate of 10% to 15% a year for the foreseeable future;

"Whereas the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board has made building a new school in Avalon a top capital priority;

"We, the undersigned, call on the province of Ontario and Ministry of Education to provide the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board with the necessary funding to build an additional school in Avalon, to open no later than September 2014."

I support this petition, and I send it forward with Georgia.

### SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act protects tenants in dwellings, long-term-care homes and retirement homes from sudden and unfair increases to their rent; and

"Whereas additional costs such as the provision of meals and other services are not subject to the said act; and

"Whereas there have been episodes of repeated, large and unjustified increases to the stated costs of meal provisioning in Cornwall and area; and

"Whereas residents do not have a say in the procurement and administration of meals and other services provided by the facility, nor can they opt out of such services when notified of an increase in charges, being thus committed to a 'take it or leave it' choice;

1550

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) To instruct the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to enact regulations ensuring fairness, protection and choice for residents of retirement homes and long-term-care facilities that provide any other necessary services such as, but not limited to, meals and personal assistance at an extra cost to their residents;

"(2) To instruct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to undertake a comprehensive review of the administration of retirement homes and long-term-care facilities with respect to the provision of services other than lodging that involve an extra charge to residents."

I agree with the petition and will be handing it to page Sabrina.

### SERVICES DIAGNOSTIQUES

**M. Michael Mantha:** À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que l'Ontario fait de la tomographie par émission de positons (TEP) un service de santé assuré par le régime public pour les patients atteints du cancer et de maladies cardiaques, lorsque les données cliniques indiquent que cette technique est efficace dans leur cas; et

« Attendu que d'ici octobre 2009, des TEP assurées seront effectuées à Ottawa, à London, à Toronto, à Hamilton ainsi qu'à Thunder Bay; et

« Attendu que la ville du Grand Sudbury est une plaque tournante pour la santé dans le Nord-Est, qui compte l'Hôpital régional de Sudbury et son programme régional de cancer, de même que l'École de médecine du Nord de l'Ontario;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'offrir de la TEP par le biais de l'Hôpital régional de Sudbury, donnant ainsi un accès équitable aux résidents du Nord-Est de l'Ontario. »

Je suis complètement d'accord avec cette pétition, monsieur le Président, et je la présente à page Andrew.

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have a petition from residents of York South-Weston.

"Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

"Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

"Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice."

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it over with page Shanice.

### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the closure of the Bluewater Youth Centre will have a negative economic impact on Goderich and the surrounding area; and

"Whereas there is a need to deal with overcrowding in the Ontario correctional system; and

"Whereas the federal Bill C-10, Safe Streets and Communities Act, will increase the population in the Ontario correctional system over the next four years; and

"Whereas the Bluewater Youth Centre would need very little retrofitting and the staff would need minimal retraining to open as a medium-secure correctional facility which could hold more than 200 beds required by



the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services; and

"Whereas specialized treatment programs within the correctional system such as drug treatment, mental health issues, could be offered with the skilled support staff currently in place; and

"Whereas we believe that this is the most economical way to add an additional 200 beds to the Ontario correctional system, as the building is in place and staff are currently hired to run such a facility;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government engage in meaningful community and employee consultation in order to find alternate uses within the youth services or correctional services system for this facility, thereby preventing job losses and economic hardship for an area already badly impacted by plant closures and tornado damage."

I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker, and I affix my signature.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT (AIR AMBULANCES), 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES (SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

Ms. Matthews moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services / *Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Ms. Matthews has moved second reading of Bill 50. Ms. Matthews.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am pleased to address the House today at the second reading of our proposed amendments to the Ambulance Act. I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the wonderful member from Guelph.

I am here today to speak to legislative amendments that will entrench greater oversight of Ontario's air ambulance service, ensuring best value for taxpayer dollars and, above all, provide high-quality patient care.

I want to start by thanking the paramedics, the pilots, the communications staff, the engineers and indeed all of the staff at Ornge who work tirelessly every day to provide the best possible care to Ontarians. It is so vitally important that we recognize these front-line staff. I've had the opportunity to visit a number of Ornge bases in Sudbury and London and Toronto, and I can tell you that the paramedics, the pilots and staff working at Ornge are as committed as ever to providing safe and high-quality

care for the people of this province. I am tremendously proud of their work, their passion and their dedication.

I also want to thank the new leadership at Ornge, who have already made real progress on their core mission of providing life-saving care to Ontario patients. I am confident that the new board and the new interim CEO have begun a new era of accountability and transparency at Ornge. The proposed legislative changes will further entrench the progress we've made and ensure a brighter future at Ontario tomorrow.

I want to take a few minutes to highlight the timeline of events that demonstrate the action I took immediately upon learning about the problems at Ornge.

In October 2010, the Auditor General announced his value-for-money audit at Ornge, and that work did continue until the release of his final report in March 2012.

On January 24, 2011, Ornge's former leadership and their legal team met with my ministry and members of my staff to discuss their new structure and business venture. Many changes had already taken place at the time of this meeting. Ornge's then-leadership and legal counsel gave clear and unequivocal assurances that no public funds would be used for their private endeavours. They also assured us that there would be no impact to the services they provide to the province of Ontario; indeed, they submitted that up to \$200 million could flow back to Ontario's air ambulance service to fill what they called service gaps in the public air ambulance service.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Excuse me. We've got—what?—one, two, three, four, five sidebars going on the opposition area. We will please take them outside. If you want to have group therapy, take it outside, please.

Continue, Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker.

In April 2011, three questions regarding Ornge were asked in question period by the member from Newmarket-Aurora. When these questions were raised, I knew that the Auditor General was doing his work and that we would be provided with objective recommendations in his report. All issues related to Ornge that were raised were forwarded on to the Auditor General.

On October 20, 2011, I was reappointed as Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. There were, as you can imagine, a number of issues that required my attention.

One week after being reappointed—on October 27, 2011—I did become aware of a number of issues being raised by the Auditor General with regard to his ongoing audit at Ornge. I instructed my ministry to do an analysis of all available options to address the initial concerns that had come to light. However, it became clear that the options were very limited. The original performance agreement with Ornge did not give us the tools we needed to address these concerns. Further, because Ornge was a federally incorporated organization, legislative options were not available.

On December 1, 2011, I met with the auditor to discuss other chapters in his annual report, specifically on physician payment models. At that time, he informed me that the Ornge audit would not be complete in time for his annual report.

On December 5, the member for Hamilton Centre asked a question in the Legislature about executive compensation at Ornge, specifically asking why it was not disclosed. I followed up with a briefing on that issue.

On December 8, a letter was sent to Ornge asking for detailed information on compensation, demanding that they disclose the executive salaries from the private side of their business.

Around the same time, I learned that the Auditor General was being stonewalled by Ornge, that they were being very uncooperative. I then spoke directly with the Auditor General and he confirmed that he was not getting the information he needed to complete his review.

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I also asked the Auditor General to confirm that salary disclosure was the subject of his audit, as concerns about Ornge's compliance with public sector salary disclosure were being raised.

On December 15, I met with senior executives at Ornge: then-COO Tom Lepine and then-board chair Rainer Beltzner. I demanded they disclose executive salaries and co-operate with and respond to requests from the Auditor General and the ministry.

On December 19, I sent a letter to Ornge clarifying the purpose and substance of our meeting, in response to a statement released by Ornge that, frankly, misrepresented the contents of our meeting. Two days later, Ornge disclosed the compensation of senior executives to my ministry and revealed particularly outrageous compensation to then-CEO Chris Mazza. That was when I knew something was seriously wrong, that I could not wait for the Auditor General's final report and that I did have to step in immediately.

The next day, December 22, I directed my ministry to inform Ornge that we were sending in the Ministry of Finance's forensic audit team to follow the public dollars. That team got to work immediately. In fact, they began the very next day, December 23.

It was at this time that I started to accelerate our plans to make changes at Ornge in a way that would not adversely impact patient safety or interrupt service. We had neither the Auditor General's final report nor the tools that could compel the Ornge board to comply with government directives. However, pressure on Ornge was growing, pressure from the Auditor General, from the ministry, from the media.

On January 11, 2012, the board of directors at Ornge signalled their intention to resign, and I recommended the appointment of an interim CEO, Ron McKerlie. A new blue-chip, volunteer board of directors was recommended for appointment on January 25, led by the board chair, Ian Delaney. The new leadership was directed to report back to me on issues of patient safety, the use of public dollars, and the development of a new performance

agreement. The new leadership team immediately began the process of winding down the for-profit entities at Ornge, as per my direction.

On February 16, I received a report from the forensic auditors revealing serious financial irregularities at Ornge. It was at this time that the matter was referred to the Ontario Provincial Police for investigation.

Ornge is now on the right path forward, but there were serious problems under the former leadership. I was tremendously disheartened to learn that the former leadership at Ornge put their interests ahead of the interests of patients. This was a small group of individuals who were trusted not only to provide excellent care but to manage the money they received in a way that Ontarians expect and deserve. As soon as I learned of the problems at Ornge, I took action, and as the Auditor General notes, we have already "taken substantive action to address many of the issues raised in this report."

As always, the Auditor General has completed a thorough and insightful review. He put forward a number of specific recommendations to improve oversight and accountability and, above all, patient safety at Ornge. Many of the recommendations have already been implemented, and I can assure all Ontarians that we will act on every single recommendation.

We now have an amended performance agreement with Ornge. This amended performance agreement will safeguard patient care and provide better value for taxpayer dollars. Under the terms of this new treatment, the minister's approval will be required for any changes to Ornge's corporate structure, including the sale of assets. This agreement will introduce a patient advocate and complaints process to ensure patient safety, similar to what we have in our hospitals.

The original performance agreement simply did not provide the accountability, oversight and transparency needed by the government. The new performance agreement will require detailed financial planning, monitoring, control and reporting obligations to increase accountability. It will also ensure compliance with the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act and the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act. It will increase audit and inspection powers by my ministry and introduce debt control provisions to prevent debt increases without ministry approval.

Finally, we'll introduce quality improvement provisions based on the Excellent Care for All Act. This includes linking executive compensation to performance improvement targets in annual quality improvement plans.

Allow me now to address the amendments to the Ambulance Act being proposed today. These amendments will further entrench stronger oversight and prevent abuses of power at Ontario's air ambulance service. It is vitally important that employees do not feel intimidated when raising concerns. That's why our proposed legislation will protect whistle-blowers at Ornge who disclose information to an inspector, an investigator or the government.



When problems came to our attention, it was far too difficult to make the necessary changes at Ornge to fix them. I could not, for example, appoint a supervisor as I could in a hospital, nor could I make changes to the performance agreement without the approval of Ornge's board of directors. To remedy this, these amendments will allow the government to take control of Ornge in extraordinary circumstances through the appointment of a supervisor, just like we can in our hospitals. It will allow us to appoint special investigators where it is in the public interest to do so.

The new legislation will also give the government the power to appoint members to the board of Ornge. In the past, if we needed to make changes to the government's performance agreement, we could only do so with Ornge's agreement. That was simply not feasible when immediate changes needed to be made. That's why the proposed legislation will allow the government to change the performance agreement with Ornge. If we had had these legislative powers, it would have gone a long way towards keeping those in charge at Ornge in check. I hope we won't need to use many of these powers in the future, but given our recent experience, I trust everyone in this Legislature will agree that they are necessary.

The actions we have taken are part of our overall commitment to raise the bar on accountability and transparency in Ontario. Since 2003, our government has taken a series of steps to improve oversight of Ontario's hard-earned tax dollars. When we were first elected, we were told by the previous government that there was no deficit in the province of Ontario. As it turned out, there was a significant deficit. That will never happen again because we've given the Auditor General the responsibility of signing off on the books prior to an election.

We have expanded freedom-of-information provisions to cover Ontario Power Generation, to cover Hydro One, to cover universities, Cancer Care Ontario. Local public utilities were brought back under freedom of information in 2004.

We introduced the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, which prohibits the practice of hiring external lobbyists with taxpayer dollars in hospitals, other large public sector organizations and publicly funded organizations that receive more than \$10 million in government funds. We've brought in stronger expense and procurement rules for broader public sector organizations, and we now require all hospitals and LHINs to report on their use of consultants and to post online the expense claim information for senior leadership. We also require all hospitals and LHINs to sign attestations that they are in compliance with the new procurement requirements, and we have made hospitals subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, effective January 1 of this year.

Thanks to this government's efforts to rebuild the foundations of our health care system, we have been able to refocus on the patient. By focusing on patients, we're making the overall experience for patients in the health care system that much better, and we're getting better value for money.

Through the Excellent Care for All Act, we've ensured that the quality of the patient experience is measured in a standardized way and reported publicly. We now hold executives accountable for the quality of care delivered.

We listen to patients and ensure the quality committees in each health care organization use the results of patient surveys to create benchmarks for improving the standards of care. And patients now have a formal mechanism to have their questions and concerns addressed through a patient advocate process. We have focused health care leadership on the task of changing the culture so that quality care for patients is the most important job that every single person in the organization does.

Hospitals now have quality improvement plans. They are publicly posted, and executive compensation is linked to the achievement of outcomes identified in those plans.

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Indeed, we've made tremendous progress in health care since 2003, and that's because we've worked together. Ontarians are waiting less time for key surgeries and diagnostic procedures, and they wait less time to be seen in hospital emergency rooms. They've got more access to family health care than ever before. More than 2.1 million Ontarians have found a doctor since 2003; and 11,000 more nurses and 3,400 more doctors are working in this province.

Health care is stronger than ever before, and we're turning our attention to improving the quality of care, putting the patient front and centre, providing evidence-based care to improve outcomes for patients through our action plan for health care. We've already moved forward on a number of initiatives in this plan, including the creation of two birth centres in Ontario. We've reformed the way we fund hospitals so the funding will follow the patient and, through our recent budget, committed to ensuring more home care and more community care services. It is a plan that has been embraced by the health care community.

I'm very proud of all these improvements in the health care system of this province, and I'm proud that they were achieved in the atmosphere of improved transparency and accountability.

At the end of the day, this action is all about respecting the hard-earned money of taxpayers of this province. Knowing that Ontarians expect government to manage their money prudently makes me determined to get the best value for our health care investments. It's why we're driving quality and value into every corner of the health care system; it's why we're bringing these legislative amendments today.

From patients to doctors, front-line paramedics to hospital administrators, personal support workers to nurses and those who work in LHINs, we all have a role to play in improving our health care system.

I'm confident that we've taken strong action to improve Ontario's air ambulance service so it's better for patients and better for taxpayers. We have new leadership in place, led by chair Ian Delaney and interim CEO Ron

McKerlie. They've already made great progress at Ornge. Together, they're improving the medical interiors of the helicopters; strengthening the online response process to improve launch times; ensuring appropriate staff coverage and coordination of resources across the province; evaluating the dispatch process; reviewing patient safety initiatives under the supervision of Sunnybrook CEO and Ornge board member Dr. Barry McLellan; and they're reviewing governance oversight and procurement practices.

We have more to do to ensure Ontario has the best possible air ambulance service, and I know that the new leadership, along with all the front-line paramedics, pilots and staff at Ornge, are eager to move forward on this transformation. I'm confident that the auditor's advice, combined with the actions we're taking, will contribute to a better air ambulance service and the highest standard of care for all Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you, Minister.

The member from Guelph.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to rise and speak in support of Bill 50, which is An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services, and obviously is the umbrella legislation which controls what goes on with Ornge.

Our proposed legislative amendments were precipitated by the problems identified by the Auditor General during his recent audit of Ornge, Ontario's air and critical-care land ambulance service. Our government took decisive action to address the Auditor General's recommendations to establish a new standard of accountability at Ornge and to restore Ontarians' faith in the important services it provides.

We committed to implement each and every one of the recommendations made by the Auditor General, but we went even further. First, we negotiated and ratified an amended performance agreement with the new Ornge board, and next, we introduced this legislation to amend the Ambulance Act, to enhance the government's ability to provide the necessary oversight into Ornge's activities.

Today, I'll set the context for those steps, providing you with a brief history of Ontario's air ambulance service. Then I'll outline the recommendations of the Auditor General's recent report into Ornge, and our government's response. Following that, I'll move on to the amended performance agreement and the provisions of our proposed amendment to the Ambulance Act.

So where did this all start? Ontario's air ambulance program was actually established back in 1977 by the then Ministry of Health with a single aircraft based in Toronto.

By 2003, the service had three main elements: funding, dispatch and oversight, provided by the ministry; a base hospital system at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre which oversaw the practice of paramedicine; and finally, air ambulances services, both helicopter and fixed-wing, that were contracted out to private air operators.

There were a couple of other things that occurred in that time frame. The Auditor General has previously reviewed Ontario's air ambulance service and at the time was quite critical of the effectiveness of a dispatch system and some of the practices there at the time. In addition, there were a coroner's report and some other reviews which commented on the fragmented nature of the service: the fact that the base hospital medical services were at one place, dispatch was at the ministry, and then you had the private operation of the actual aircraft. So the actual need to do something was identified from various parties who looked at the existing ambulance service back around about 2003.

In June 2005, the government transferred and consolidated the air ambulance program to what was then known as the Ontario Air Ambulance Services Corp., known for short as OAA, which was a federally—and this becomes important—incorporated non-profit corporation.

In November 2005, our government finalized a long-term performance agreement with the OAA. The performance agreement had an indefinite term—so it was totally open-ended—and governed all aspects of air ambulance services. The performance agreement with Ornge established Ornge and the ministry's responsibilities and expectations in the services to be delivered by Ornge. For example, they now had control of all aspects: the base hospital; air contracting; organ recovery services, which often involve flights; other aeromedical services; and so on.

The original performance agreement also covered compliance with grant funding and government accounting requirements; data tracking, retention and reporting; quality assurance in the education and training of flight paramedics and flight dispatch staff; a complaints and incident reporting process; documentation standards; and ministry evaluation and monitoring. That was what was in the original performance agreement, which, at the time when people looked at it, they thought, "That covers a lot." As we've seen as things have unrolled, of course, we found out that it didn't include enough, even though it seemed to include a lot.

By January 2006, the OAA became responsible for all operational functions of the province's air ambulance program.

In September 2006, as the newly renamed Ornge, the corporation took over the management of air ambulance dispatch. So at this point it's got management of everything.

In 2007, Ornge then went on and signed an agreement for expanded critical-care fixed-wing air ambulance services.

In 2008, Ornge took over responsibility to provide critical-care land ambulance services. That same year, Ornge purchased new high-performance medically equipped helicopters and added new high-performance medically equipped aircraft to its fleet.

In 2009, Ornge air purchased four hangars, located in Ottawa, Moosonee, Kenora and London.



In 2010, Ornge opened Canada's first transport medicine centre of excellence and, by the end of that year, reached a significant milestone, transporting its 100,000th patient.

Since their creation, air ambulance services in Ontario have undergone a number of enhancements that extended services across the entire province.

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For additional background, I would like to turn briefly to the legislation and accountability mechanisms that govern ambulance service in Ontario. Both land and air ambulance services are governed by the Ambulance Act and regulations and standards made under the act. Of course, what Bill 50 is going to do is amend the Ambulance Act, which controls both air and land ambulance services.

The act, as currently constituted, sets out the responsibilities and expectations of the minister and other parties related to the delivery of land and air ambulance and related services. And of course, because it covers land ambulance service, a large part of that is really more related to thinking about the relationship between the municipalities, which for the most part supply land ambulance service rather than air ambulance service, whereas what we're tabling here is very explicitly related to the air ambulance service.

The government provides Ornge with funding, through a contractual agreement, to deliver air ambulance services as part of the minister's obligation under the Ambulance Act to fund and ensure the provision of air ambulance service. The province also supplies Ornge with funding to operate the critical-care land ambulance service.

So that's by way of history to where we are now.

Now I think we need to look at why we need to enhance the accountability provisions and transparency provisions that are currently in the act and in the old performance agreement. Of course, we're all aware that the Auditor General tabled a report earlier this year that was quite critical of some of the things that are going on at Ornge, and we also know that there's been a lot of public discussion in the last few months around things that have gone awry at Ornge.

But I'd like to begin by thanking the Auditor General for his thorough and very insightful review of Ornge. His advice has guided many of the actions our government is taking to fix the problems at Ornge, and we're confident that the concerns raised by the Auditor General will be addressed through the swift actions we've already taken, and through these proposed legislative amendments.

What did the auditor have to say? Well, the Auditor General recommends that the ministry renegotiate the performance agreement with Ornge and establish measurable performance indicators. That's interesting, because I happened to be on the committee the first time the auditor reviewed the air ambulance service. And it was interesting that when the deputy minister of the day spoke to us at public accounts at that point, they talked quite extensively about not just why they needed to set

up a new service, but they also talked about having measurable performance indicators. What I think we have found out is that while there were certainly some performance indicators in the original performance agreement, whether they were (a) extensive enough and (b) whether they were actually reasonably measurable has turned out not to be the case.

So the auditor said we need to go back and renegotiate; we need to have a better performance agreement. In essence, the auditor was recognizing that the performance agreement as constituted when Ornge was originally set up really didn't do it. It didn't let the government get the information and the oversight that it really needed.

So we have looked at that, and with the benefit of hindsight it's very clear that the previous agreement simply did not have the oversight we needed or the powers that were required to step in sooner when it became evident that things were going off the rails at Ornge.

Under the former agreement—so this is the old performance agreement, the first one—the past leadership was able to avoid accountability and withhold information from the government concerning its for-profit companies. We simply did not have the power to regulate, to regularly access financial information and monitor operations at Ornge. And both the auditor and some of the testimony that we've heard in the current hearings going on at public accounts—we've heard from the auditor, in particular, how frustrating even the auditor found it to try and get information about what was going on at Ornge, because some of the information was available, but anything that had been transferred over to the for-profit corporations was simply just being blocked. The legal opinion that Ornge had received was, "If we put it at the for-profit subsidiaries, we don't have to provide it to the government," and even the Auditor General found that the Auditor General couldn't get the information once the particular aspect of the operation had been transferred.

So it became very apparent that the limited operational and financial information that was provided to the ministry was insufficient and, in some cases, inaccurate. So it was more than insufficient. As we've gotten better access to the information, we've begun to realize that, in fact, the information was often inaccurate or misleading.

For example, the old performance agreement did not require ministry approval to create for-profit entities like Ornge Global, which is where many of the problems began. The government had no control over these for-profit entities, and we were falsely assured, as it turns out, that public dollars would not be used to fund the for-profit enterprises. Most of these for-profit entities are now gone, and the rest are in the process of being wound down.

In the past, Ornge also had no restrictions on assuming debt. The old performance agreement gave the government no say in major acquisitions. We know that the former leadership made a significant helicopter purchase

and that they purchased and leased back their corporate headquarters. Under the amended performance agreement, which was ratified by our government and the Ornge board on March 19, and now in effect, all those things have been fixed.

So just to make this perfectly clear, the new performance agreement which has been negotiated with the new management, the new board at Ornge, has now been signed, is now in effect. So with respect to the performance agreement, when I talk about the new performance agreement, it's done; it's there. When we talk about the legislation, of course, that's now what is before this House. That needs our approval to move forward. So I want to make that distinction.

Now, with respect to the amended performance agreement, then, which is now in effect, it raises the level of oversight far above that which is normally required of organizations receiving public funds. So not only does the new performance agreement bring us up to standard in terms of accountability and transparency, it actually goes beyond what is often the required standard for transfer agencies. So the performance agreement, the new performance agreement, is very rigorous in terms of its requirement.

Most importantly, we want to focus on patient care. We know that we need to safeguard patient care and make sure that patients in Ontario who have some critical illness where they require air ambulance or critical land ambulance transfer are getting the best care possible from Ornge. So we really need to focus on how we are treating—ultimately, that's what it's all about: making sure that we're taking care of those critical services for our patients.

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The enhanced provisions of the amended performance agreement can be grouped under two general headings: first of all, accountability and transparency; and secondly, safeguarding patient safety and care.

Let's look at what's new in accountability and transparency under the new performance agreement. As the auditor's report shows, Ornge was not providing the ministry with the appropriate operational and financial information we needed to assess the quality and value of its service. And it now appears that the information that was provided, as I say, was either often insufficient or inaccurate.

The amended performance agreement raises the level of oversight with the following measures and obligations: first of all, tougher funding conditions based on key performance indicators so that the funding is now much more directly tied to achieving the performance indicators; increased audit and inspection powers by the ministry; more detailed financial planning, monitoring, control and reporting obligations; a committee to advise the board on quality improvement initiatives.

At public accounts this morning, we all actually heard from Barry McLellan, who some people around here might remember as the former chief coroner of the province of Ontario. He is now the CEO of Sunnybrook

health services. He is now serving on the board, the new board, at Ornge, and he is leading the quality care committee at Ornge. So the person who is now leading the quality care function at Ornge has a wealth of experience in both emergency services and other aspects of medicine, and in hospital administration. So we've got an absolutely top-notch expert who is now leading the new focus on advising the board on quality improvement initiatives.

The new performance agreement also sets up a new patient advocate and complaints process to ensure patient safety, which is modeled on the one that is used in Ontario hospitals.

There's mandatory public reporting of expenses and restrictions on meals, travel and hospitality, much more like either is internally true of the public service or true of many of our transfer payments, with the new directives that we have put in for our transfer partners, so we're bringing Ornge into those requirements.

There are quality improvement provisions that link executive compensation to actual performance improvement targets in the annual quality plan, and there is mandatory approval by the minister for any changes to Ornge's corporate structure, which was obviously lacking in the previous case. Now, changes in corporate structure have to go to the minister, and the minister must also approve the sale of assets by Ornge, of any major assets.

The whole performance and accountability structure has been totally overhauled and is much more rigorous. There's much more access for the government to the information that we need to make sure that Ornge is operating properly.

Then, if we look at safeguarding patient care and safety, where the auditor again highlighted some concerns around dispatch and response times for air and critical-care land ambulance, again, our government is taking these concerns extremely seriously, Speaker.

In the past, Ornge was not obligated to report emergency dispatch information; that is, to report back to the ministry on the effectiveness of their emergency dispatch. Going forward, the amended performance agreement will place a greater emphasis on performance standards and require increased reporting of dispatch information, including cancelled and declined air and land ambulance calls. Mr. McLellan this morning told us that was one of his top priorities, is this whole issue around effective dispatch service. That was certainly in this current report from the Auditor General. One of the things that he focused on was the need to improve the dispatching of the air ambulances, and the critical-care land ambulance as well.

The performance agreement is closely aligned with the Excellent Care for All Act, which guides the province's hospitals. Quality improvement and key performance indicators will now be linked to both Ornge's funding and executive compensation because, as we all know, executive compensation is one of the things that tipped us off in the first place to something being seriously wrong at Ornge. Those indicators are now much more carefully controlled, executive compensation in particular.



To ensure that patient safety remains paramount, a new patient advocate will be appointed, a complaints process will be developed, and it will be posted publicly, because one of the problems with the old Ornge agreement was that people didn't necessarily know how to complain. There might have been a complaints process, but if nobody in the public knows how to get to the complaints process, it's not a very effective process. So there will now be a requirement that the public can actually figure out how to complain, because that's the first step: that you need to be able to get feedback from the public.

The amended performance agreement also deals with enhancing the quality of Ornge's services, based on objective, evidence-based performance indicators. In addition, the performance agreement also provides for tougher funding conditions based on key performance indicators, and a committee to advise the board on quality improvement initiatives.

The second audit recommendation from the Auditor General is for the ministry to conduct a formal program evaluation of critical-care land ambulance transports in the province. In response, let me say that our government shares the auditor's concerns that the government's expenditures should provide the government and the people of Ontario with real value for money.

To address this concern and act upon it, the minister committed to a comprehensive program review that will evaluate the operational demand and Ornge's delivery model for both air ambulance service and critical-care land ambulance service. Although I think the public focus has often been on the air ambulance component of the services which Ornge provides, we're making sure that that critical-care land ambulance component is something that we're also looking at, because that's often equally important.

What about Bill 50, which is what is before us? If that's in the performance agreement, what is it that's actually in Bill 50? Because we've done what we could do in the performance agreement, some things have to come to legislation in order to update the requirements there, Speaker.

On March 21, the minister introduced the proposed amendments to the Ambulance Act that would, if passed, do a number of things with respect to an air ambulance service provider such as Ornge.

Let me just explain here. As I said before, the act covers both air and land ambulance, so I'm going to keep referring here to "air ambulance service provider." If I could just quote from the act, there's a new definition here:

"Designated air ambulance service provider" means a person,

"(a) that is designated in the regulations, and

"(b) at the time of designation holds a certificate under section 8 that refers to the provision of air ambulance services;"

These things are very specifically about air, and obviously the regulation that would go along with this

would say that Ornge is a designated air ambulance service provider. While the language in the act is very legalistic, every time I say "air ambulance service provider," think Ornge, okay?

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So, what does Bill 50 do? Firstly, it would give cabinet the power, upon the recommendation of the minister, to appoint one or more provincial representatives to the board of an air ambulance service provider. So if you think about what has happened in the last few months, yes, the minister did in essence ask for the resignation of the old board, and there was an appointment of a new board, but there actually was never really any legal authority for the minister to appoint people to the board of Ornge. The government will now have the authority to appoint some of the board members at Ornge, which means that the province, as in many of our other transfer partners, particularly in the health area—the government will actually have some ability to have some direct input into the decision-making at the board level and be tied into what's going on with the decision-maker. So that is a new provision.

Secondly, it gives the minister the power to issue directives to an air ambulance service provider. Before, it sort of set up a corporation but the minister really didn't have, beyond the performance agreement, the authority to issue directives. Now it is quite clear that when a new issue comes up—because one is never perfect in foresight in anticipating all future issues; none of us are that perfect—there is a provision within the act which enables the minister to issue directives when and if a new issue arises.

Thirdly, it gives the government the ability to include provisions in an agreement between Ontario and an air ambulance service provider. Including provisions in the agreement is a legalistic way of saying that the minister has the right to unilaterally, in essence, amend the performance agreement. Remember what was said by the minister in her comments, that people kept saying, "Oh, well, you should just amend the agreement." But she couldn't just amend the agreement because that required the approval of the board of Ornge, and the board of Ornge said, "We don't want to amend the agreement. We like it without you having a lot of control." So this actually gives the minister the power to amend the agreement.

That's a question which actually the third party has raised with some witnesses at the public accounts hearing, because there are various other health providers that they are familiar with, transfer payment agencies in the health sector, where the minister has the power to amend the performance agreement. The question was raised, "Well, why couldn't you just do that with Ornge unilaterally?" Well, the point is that for those other acts which control some of those other health sectors, their controlling act did give the minister the power to amend. This act, the Ambulance Act, didn't give the minister the power to amend.

So this puts the power given the minister to amend the performance agreement into the act with respect to air

ambulance service provision, which means that in some respects it's catching up with some of the other health service providers, but it also gives the minister the power to amend the agreement, which was not previously held.

Then there's a whole series of arrangements which are essentially in parallel with the Public Hospitals Act; firstly, providing cabinet with the power to appoint a special investigator to investigate and report on certain activities of an air ambulance service provider. Individuals would be prohibited from obstructing a special investigator or from withholding any information required by the special investigator. A special investigator would also be required to provide a report to the minister upon completion of their investigation. Then, depending on the outcome of that investigation, the amended act would also provide cabinet with the power, upon the recommendation of the minister, to appoint a supervisor to exercise the powers of the board, officers and members and other corporate powers of an air ambulance service provider. The supervisor would have the same rights as the board of an air ambulance service provider and the supervisor would report to the minister.

Now, some of you who have been involved with hospital supervisors—there are very similar provisions in the Education Act around appointment of supervisors. There's a number of acts which have the provisions that allow—first, the Public Hospitals Act, for example, where there is a power to appoint an investigator and then, depending on the outcome of the investigation, the power to appoint a supervisor and actually take over the operation if things are seriously astray.

We obviously hope that we will never ever have to use that power. But the air ambulance provisions, if this act is passed, will now be in line with many other health sector and public sector transfer agencies where, in fact, if things have gone wrong, the minister actually does have the power to step in and take over.

Finally, the act would prohibit retaliation against a person who has disclosed information that relates to an air ambulance service provider to an inspector, investigator or special investigator. Air ambulance service providers and other persons would also be prohibited from doing anything to discourage the making of such disclosures, which is the fancy legal language for how you describe whistle-blower provisions. So the Ambulance Act with respect to Ornge will now explicitly have whistle-blowing protection in it. If there ever is a need to have an investigator, that person can be assured that people will be protected if they talk to the investigator.

Then, finally, section 3 of Bill 50—if any of you wish to read Bill 50, the part that when you get there your eyes will glaze over—says that it allows the continuance of a provider of air ambulance services that is “incorporated under the laws of any jurisdiction other than Ontario ... as a corporation under the Corporations Act.”

This is where one really needs a corporate lawyer to help understand the actual details of the language. But if you think back to what the minister said, she pointed out that Ornge was a federally incorporated not-for-profit

and, as the new management at Ornge is winding down the subsidiaries, which, again, I think are, for the most part, federally incorporated for-profit subsidiaries, we are trying to bring those—well, we're winding down the subsidiaries, but Ornge itself needs to come back into the provincial legislative umbrella.

There are some legal impediments which—I don't pretend to be a corporate lawyer, so you're going to have to find yourself a corporate lawyer if you want the detailed explanation. But there are some impediments in the process of reforming Ornge from federal to provincial, but also winding down federal subsidiaries and putting them into the provincially incorporated Ornge.

So, the effect of section 3 is to let us get on with fixing Ornge. We need this legislation to conclude the process of winding down the subsidiaries and getting Ornge, the original Ornge that just does public air ambulance service, under the umbrella of provincial legislation. As I say, I don't pretend to be a corporate lawyer, but what I do understand is, I think every member in this House has an interest in making sure that that work at Ornge which the new board and the new management is carrying out in getting rid of those for-profit subsidiaries and the charity that had ski boats or whatever they were doing—getting rid of all these things and finishing up that process. And we need this legislation.

#### 1650

What we do not need is people wasting debate time and ringing the bell for 30 minutes here and 30 minutes there, when this is a critical piece of legislation that we need to get on with restructuring Ornge for the benefit of the taxpayers of Ontario and the people who are having critical emergency health situations. We need to deliver the service to people. We do not need to be wasting our time listening to ringing bells. We need to get to work and deal with this act.

So, in conclusion, this proposed legislation, along with the amended performance agreement, builds on steps already taken to improve oversight at Ornge, including the launching of a forensic audit, the appointment of an interim president and CEO, as well as a new board of directors and the winding down of for-profit entities. We have taken these measures in response to the auditor's recommendations and have taken action to restore confidence in Ontario's air and critical land ambulance services.

The new leadership at Ornge has established a new era of transparency and accountability at the organization. Thanks to their commitment and dedication, there has already been terrific progress on improvements at Ornge. The leadership team has been working to address concerns regarding the medical interiors of the helicopters, and they're now working to strengthen the online response process, to improve launch times, ensure appropriate staff coverage and the coordination of resources across the province, to evaluate the dispatch process, review the patient safety initiatives under the supervision of Sunnybrook CEO and Ornge board member Dr. Barry McLellan, and review the government oversight and procurement practices.



There is no question that the new leadership and the front-line staff are doing their utmost to deliver safe, reliable air ambulance services to the people of Ontario. They are putting their full efforts towards their core mission of providing life-saving care to Ontario patients. I want to thank the dedicated paramedics, pilots and front-line staff at Ornge who work so hard every day to save lives. I'm confident that the auditor's advice, combined with the actions that we are taking, will contribute to a better air ambulance service and the highest standards of care for all Ontarians.

But now it's in our court. This is the piece of the work that is our responsibility as members of this Legislature from every party. This is our part of the job. So I urge every member to support our proposed amendments and expedite the passage of Bill 50, the amendments to the Ambulance Act which will allow us to complete the work at Ornge.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I know this is a very long hour that we've listened to the goings-on on Bill 50, but the really important discussion today—I want to start by recognizing the member from Guelph wearing the team jacket for Ornge. They really are onside with that organization with Chris Mazza as the former CEO. I think they've really scored a goal here with that organization; in fact, you can take that to the bank.

But the real point I'm making here is that I think this is like a clear admission of guilt. It's like closing the barn door after the horses have all run away, and in fact, you're doing a lot after the fact and very little before the fact, when you actually knew—if everything I've heard is true, there were a lot of connections. And I want to thank our members, especially Frank Klees, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, for his leadership and his, I would say, professionalism. He's never really gotten into the personal stuff so much as trying to frame who knew what, when.

I'm not sure Bill 50 is going to do that. It's certainly setting up a governance model to protect the Minister of Health from any further exposure on this file, but I still feel very uncomfortable when health dollars have been wasted.

I think back over the last number of years—the eHealth part. In some of the rollout of Aging at Home, for instance, there was a lot of money spent on vehicles but not too much on service.

Here's one more case where there have been hundreds of millions of dollars spent. On transition, I'm sure there are problems, but I am not convinced, from any action I've seen or response by the minister or in fact the Premier, that I can trust them to get this right.

We need a full, clear, select committee on this to get to the root cause before this new organization is given even more powers and we find out from the next auditor's report that it's still out of control. I still remain concerned.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It's rather interesting to listen to the Minister of Health and her PA about this. We just spent the entire day at public accounts, where we found out that the existing performance agreement had many levers in it that were never—they never even tried to use them.

We also find out that numerous briefings were offered to a number of ministry people. The chair of Ornge came to the Ministry of Health, went into the minister's boardroom, explained exactly the structure that they were about to put in place, explained the for-profit companies that were about to be created, laid it all out, and assured himself that he was clear, concise and understood and that the people there understood what he had just explained. Then the government did nothing.

We can put all the bills in the world that we want; we can make them bulletproof if we want; but if you see no evil, hear no evil, then the three little monkeys are pretty useless, aren't they?

*Interjections.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** My colleagues are joking there, and I have a hard time staying serious.

At the end of the day, what we are presented with here is too little, too late. This is not going to be helpful. There is so much spotlight on Ornge now that they're not going to breathe out of time or move one baby finger out of sync.

They needed to act before. It's becoming clear that they knew a long time ago and refused to act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** The bill in front of us, Bill 50, the Ambulance Amendment Act, amends the Ambulance Act, so I think it's important to realize that we're amending an important act, and also to realize that—I understand the concerns about Ornge. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care: Almost half our budget is spent on that ministry. It's one of the largest ministries we have, and there are so many things that happen within that ministry. It's almost impossible, in my view, for a minister to be totally up to date on all the different matters that occur there. But the bureaucrats, the people that work under the ministry, are given the job to do that.

Without pointing my finger at any bureaucrat, I think it's important to note that this bill, Bill 50, appoints a supervisor or a special investigator when the air ambulance service is not being operated in the public interest, similar to a hospital. It also allows the minister to give directives to an air ambulance service provider, like a hospital. It allows the ministry to establish terms that are deemed to be included in the performance agreement between the ministry and the air ambulance service. It continues with other amendments, such as to appoint provincial representatives on the air ambulance provider's board, and to provide whistle-blower protection for those who disclose information to an inspector, investigator or a ministry. It also provides the means for the current air ambulance, Ornge, to become a provin-

cially incorporated organization, which will even further increase accountability of the organization.

1700

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Very similar to my colleague from Nickel Belt, this is just too little, too late. Where was the accountability and the oversight in the first place? This boondoggle, this fiasco, has been going on through three ministers of health, beginning with George Smitherman, through David Caplan, and it continues with current Minister Matthews, who not only ignored questions regarding Ornge here in the Legislature in April of last year, but also turned a blind eye to a detailed written appeal for her intervention from the Ontario Air Transport Association.

Speaker, this is becoming a recurring theme. What we continue to hear in there is, “We need to do better. We will do better.” That’s not acceptable. This is the health care of the people of Ontario. We need to be doing things right the first time. Scandalous waste of resources, scarce resources, for our health care sector, the deals we’re hearing about, the schemes—this was not something that just all of a sudden appeared overnight. This was very well thought out. This was a scheme that people could not bring people into this Legislature to make sure we understood what’s going on. This was well thought out and deceitful, Speaker, and it’s unacceptable.

We need to ensure that when people on the front line bring ideas, concerns forward, they have the ability to speak clearly, with open conscience and no fear of reprisal. This Bill 50 is nothing more than the McGuinty government’s attempt to divert attention away from its failure to take action against Ornge, despite repeated warnings of financial irregularities, bloated executive salaries, operational deficiencies and, worst of all, compromising of patient health care.

Speaker, this is an Ornge bomb. It’s not a blossom; it’s a bomb. It’s terrible. As my colleague from Durham suggested, I can’t believe you would wear a team coat in here after all that’s gone on and the scandal of such an Ornge fiasco.

Speaker, it’s unacceptable. It’s a red herring. We will not be supporting it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Guelph has a two-minute response.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** When I get comments about how the witness said this and the witness said that, I really do need to push back. What Mr. Beltzner, the chair of the board, said—and he said that this is what he told people in such briefings as well:

“The use of all government funds was restricted to the benefit of Ontario’s air medical transport system.

“On the last point, I am compelled to reiterate my position and the instructions conveyed to management by the board. The board’s absolute, unequivocal directive to Ornge management was that no public funds were to be used for the operations of the for-profit side of the company.”

Well, it turns out that that’s hogwash. But that was what Mr. Beltzner put in writing to all the different ministries and told, verbally, to anyone who met with him. That was the information he conveyed. Now, as we know, that was not accurate. This is the same man who told the committee that it was okay if he got \$200,000 a year to be the chair of the board and he was okay with the fact that Dr. Mazza got \$1.4 million, because they’d had a compensation analyst tell them it was okay. But apparently, the opposition wants to take Mr. Beltzner’s word for it that he told the government everything there was to know. I’m a little bit more skeptical.

I reiterate what I said before: We need to get this done, every single one of us here, so the work on restructuring Ornge can be completed, and I ask for your support.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Durham might want to get back in his seat if he wants to talk. Thank you.

Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I have mixed feelings about speaking to this bill, and the reason for that is that it really should be named the red herring bill, because what we have here in Bill 50 is nothing more than the McGuinty government’s attempt to divert attention away from its failure to take action against Ornge, despite repeated warnings of financial irregularities, bloated executive salaries, operational deficiencies and, worst of all, compromising of patient care.

Before I go on, Speaker, I want to advise you that I’m sharing my time with my colleague from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, who is the deputy critic for health, and I look forward to his comments as well.

We have now spent a great deal of time at the public accounts committee on this scandal. We have spent numerous hours during question period in the Legislature, bringing to the attention of the Legislature the shortcomings and the failure of the Minister of Health to step in and ensure that there is proper oversight of Ontario’s air ambulance service. We have pointed questions at the Minister of Finance for his failure to provide proper oversight. We have repeatedly attempted to get the Premier’s attention, because we know that the Premier was properly briefed on this issue and did nothing.

Repeatedly—repeatedly—we get nothing from the government other than a defensive posturing. Now here is my question: We cannot understand why, on an important issue like this, there should be any contention among any of us in this place about what the proper steps should be and about condemning those who failed to look after and protect something as important as our emergency air ambulance service.

We should all be on common ground on that issue. But for some reason, members of the government feel they must defend something. What they should be doing, and I say this with a great deal of sincerity—the Minister of Health, I believe, has done a great deal of discredit to her office by defending her role and by insisting that she had no authority and no leverage to step in. By doing



that, she has actually admitted that she has failed the people of this province, and we've repeatedly called on the Minister of Health to do the honourable thing: Step aside and allow someone else to move forward and provide leadership.

The Minister of Health has repeatedly defended the indefensible, and defended an organization that, quite frankly, has wasted precious, scarce health care dollars. Yet, when I raised those issues in April last year here, from this desk on three different occasions, the best the minister could do—and we can check Hansard—was to defend the organization. I can still hear her words: what a great organization it is, how proud she is of the work that Ornge is doing.

Why did she feel so compelled to defend an organization that she herself had had many warnings about up until that point? She had a letter. If she didn't want to believe a fellow colleague here in the Legislature, she had a letter sent to her by the Ontario Air Transport Association. This is addressed to the Honourable Deb Matthews, May 4, 2011. Here's what it said: "We want to advise you that Ornge has seriously misled the industry and all Ontarians about its true intentions. It compromised patient care and created serious personnel and cost issues for the hospitals."

This is a letter that is five pages long. The minister never even bothered to respond to these people. These are stakeholders, respected people in our province, and she ignored it. This ostrich syndrome bridged three ministers, unfortunately: Minister Smitherman, who actually signed the document, that original performance agreement. What did he do with that? He transferred all the assets of our air ambulance service to Dr. Chris Mazza and his organization for \$1. There was not one moment of transparency in that. There was no effort to take this to a public tendering process to determine whether there may be someone else in this great province of Ontario who may have had greater experience, more extensive experience, more capacity than Dr. Chris Mazza. No, it was handed over, behind closed doors, for \$1. We thank George Smitherman for that.

1710

Minister Caplan, a minister who inherited the agreement: We know that members of the Liberal Party wrote letters to Minister Caplan. Minister Gravelle wrote a letter to Minister Caplan, the member from Peterborough wrote a letter to Minister Caplan, raising concerns.

What did they do? Let me tell you what they did. Here is what Mr. Caplan, Minister Caplan at the time, did. He referred those people who were complaining back to Ornge. My, that's leadership. That's looking after things on behalf of the people of Ontario. That's showing true leadership. Every one of them failed, and then we come to the current minister, who not only ignored questions regarding Ornge here in the Legislature but turned a blind eye to many other concerns that were brought to her office.

Not until the scandalous goings-on at Ornge were brought to the attention of the public by the media did the

minister finally take notice. Why is that? Why is it that it takes a front-page story by the Toronto Star to finally get the Minister of Health to say, "Hey, maybe we've got a problem here." And thank goodness for the media. I say to you, Speaker, you know, in many ways, the media has become, in today's world, an official opposition to the government. Why? Because the government doesn't respect the members who were elected here, but they do care whether they're going to be embarrassed in the public through stories by the media. It's unfortunate, it's not the way this is supposed to work here, but that is exactly what's going on.

Now, among her first litany of excuses for not doing anything, what was the first excuse that we heard in this place from the minister? "The performance agreement didn't allow me to take action." That awful performance agreement, and she threw—the minister threw her former colleague under the bus a couple of times for that, and he did fight back, because I recall the articles in the media. In fact, he wrote a letter to the editor in which he said, "Oh, no, no. No, it's not the performance agreement; it's the minister who failed to act, and it's the people in her ministry who failed to act."

Well, here's what happened. Repeatedly, the minister stood in this place and represented to us here and to the public that she couldn't act because the performance agreement didn't let her. And to legitimize the minister's excuses, what do we have now? She announced with great fanfare that she's going to solve the problem by giving us a new, improved performance agreement that we heard about in debate today.

Speaker, we're debating Bill 50 here because the other blanket that the minister is now covering herself with to comfort herself is Bill 50: "Oh, we need new legislation so that this will never happen again." Well, it's interesting, because neither is necessary to protect the public. Neither a new performance agreement nor this bill is necessary to ensure that our air ambulance service complies with the direction of the government.

Under oath today—Lynne Golding, who is a partner of the law firm Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP, testified under oath. This was the firm that was advising Ornge. She spoke very clearly about the structure that was incorporated, the reason why it was incorporated. I want to read it into the record, because this was a turning point. Today was a turning point on this issue, and the reason is that the primary reasons that the Minister of Health has been telling us here in the House that she couldn't act were both unearthed as lame excuses because they were false. Those reasons were false.

The member for Guelph said that we should find ourselves a corporate lawyer to help us understand the complexities of this new legislation. Well, we had a corporate lawyer in our committee today who told us, under oath, that effectively this legislation is unnecessary, and she told us that the performance agreement is unnecessary as well.

Here's what she said. She told us that the performance agreement that was signed in 2005 was developed over a

period of years and included the advice of some of the most senior people in the government. She also told us—and I'd like you to listen to this, Speaker, please.

"From a legal perspective, we ... took as our model an example closer to home." This was talking about the corporate structure for the original incorporation of Ornge as a not-for-profit. "At that time, there were approximately 150 health service providers operating in the province, offering their services to the public, receiving almost all of their operating funding from the province. Most, but not all, of them are provincially incorporated. They were non-share capital corporations"—just like Ornge—"registered as federal charities with boards elected by their members and without provincial government appointees. What were they? Ontario's public hospitals."

Isn't that interesting, Speaker? She went on to tell us that five of those public hospitals were federally incorporated. What does that do to the excuse that the minister has been giving us that she couldn't intervene because Ornge was federally incorporated? We have five of our public hospitals that have precisely the same structure as Ornge had. Is the minister telling us that she can't intervene in those hospitals? Of course not. But what we were told by that corporate lawyer under oath today is that what the minister has been telling us is false. She should be held accountable for that, and we intend to do that.

The other excuse that the minister gave us is that the performance agreement would not allow her to intervene. Here is what the corporate lawyer who was acting for Ornge for many years told us, under oath, today:

"The agreement includes extensive reporting obligations and provides the ministry with three separate inspection rights. It gave the ministry access to records pertaining to the grant funds, whether held by Ornge or under Ornge's control.

"It gave the ministry the right to terminate the agreement for cause, including failing to comply with any of Ornge's 15 pages of covenants. If the ministry believed that Ornge was not complying with the agreement but did not want to terminate it—for fear that that would create further risks to patient safety—the ministry could have issued a notice of default or threatened to do so. That usually gets the attention of a grant recipient."

Speaker, the minister had the authority under the performance agreement to act. She failed to do so. And to stand in her place here, day in and day out, and tell us and tell the public that her hands were tied because of a federal incorporation or because of a performance agreement—Speaker, I have a hard time finding any other word, and you won't let me use it, but I will say that it was not the truth.

Now, having said that, I'd like to move on, and I would like—

1720

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Klees, that was borderline, as you know. You've got enough

seniority in this place to know that I would ask you to withdraw that one.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I will withdraw. It was borderline, Speaker; I realize that. I felt compelled, given the circumstances, to let the people know here what the facts are and—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, I can't help my frustration when I listened, even a few minutes ago, to the member from Guelph talk about how this new performance agreement would give powers that were never there before. For example, it requires Ornge to keep records of calls that were made. Article 9 of the original agreement—I have it in my hand—the entire article 9 speaks to reporting and records and requires Ornge to keep those records. I don't know how the member can stand in her place with a good conscience and say that documents must now be kept and that was never the case before.

Article 6 of the old performance agreement talks about documentation and administration, and it talks about the requirement that Ornge had to comply.

Speaker, for those who don't know, it all sounds very good. But it's our responsibility here in the Legislature to ensure that the people of this province know what the facts are and know the truth, and we intend to ensure that the people of Ontario find out what that truth is.

One of the interesting things about what is going on here in this Legislature is the fact that we had a very historical vote, Speaker, you'll recall, not very long ago, on a motion that called on the government to form a select committee of the Legislature, an all-party committee of the Legislature, that would be focused exclusively on discovering the truth about this Ornge scandal. It is intended to be of a broad scope and allow the appropriate time for people to come forward—current employees, former employees, stakeholders, who can come forward under the protection of true whistle-blower protection so that there won't be reprisals against them as employees or as suppliers. The official opposition, the PC caucus, and the third party, the NDP caucus, voted in solidarity for that motion. Every member of the Liberal caucus voted against it. We still don't know why. What is it that they want to hide? Nevertheless, we won the vote.

So we have standing now a direction, a motion to the government, to say, "Strike the select committee." This government is refusing. You heard the member from Guelph talk about how we shouldn't be ringing the bells, how we should just simply co-operate with this government, let them take us down a garden path, and I suppose she'd like us to join hands and sing Kumbaya while we're at it. Well, Speaker, it's not happening.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the member from Durham to go back to his seat if he wants to speak. All right? Otherwise, you know the deal here. Thank you.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, we will not do that. We want the government to respect the will of the Legislature. There is an express direction to the government



House leader to strike an all-party committee so that we can get to the bottom of this.

The former president of the Liberal Party of Canada came and testified at the committee. He opened up his prepared remarks by saying that unfortunately, the 30 minutes that were allotted per witness were insufficient to deal with the matters before us.

Speaker, I didn't agree with very much that this witness brought to us that day, but I do agree with that, and that is precisely why we're calling for a select committee. We do not have the time, within a 30-minute time allocation per witness, one day a week—we now have five weeks left before this House breaks for the summer. That's five days that we have left to actually hear from witnesses under that restricted format that we have. It's a perfect play on the part of the government to say, "We want to suppress the information, as opposed to allowing that information to come forward." That's why people hear the ringing of the bells. It's the only tool that the opposition has to get the attention of the government and say, "Will you listen and will you respect the will of the Legislature and give us that select committee so that we can get on with doing our job?"

I want to point something out to the Minister of Health. Perhaps her staff have not advised her of this. One of the reasons that was given for the need for Bill 50 is so that the minister can send inspectors into Ornge if she feels that is necessary. I'm not sure where the minister has been or where her staff has been, but there's something on the books here in the province of Ontario called the Health Facilities Special Orders Act, RSO 1990—

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Which doesn't apply to Ornge.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** —and it defines "ambulance service." The member from Guelph is carping here, Speaker, saying that it doesn't apply. Let me tell you: I have it on good authority that it does apply, and here is why it applies. I have it here. The member should look at it. It talks about ambulance service, and it says:

"'ambulance service' has the same meaning as in the Ambulance Act."

It goes on to say:

"'health facility' means,

"(a) an ambulance service under the Ambulance Act...." That qualifies Ornge, Mr. Speaker.

It goes on to say, and I'm going to read from the act:

"The purposes of this act are:

"1. To enable the minister to act expeditiously to prevent, eliminate or reduce harm to any person, an adverse effect on the health of any person or impairment of the safety of any person caused or likely to be caused by the physical state of a health facility or the manner of operation of a health facility.

"2. To enable the minister to act expeditiously where the conduct of a licensee or of an officer or director of a corporate licensee affords reasonable grounds for belief that the health facility is not being or is not likely to be operated with competence, honesty, integrity and concern for the health and safety of persons served by the health

facility." Sounds familiar, doesn't it, knowing what we know about Ornge?

It goes on to say that the minister may, number one, suspend Ornge's licence until satisfied that corrections have been made. Ornge comes under section 2.2 of that act. It qualifies.

She would also have been able to take control and operate Ornge for a period of six months and select—here it is. To the member from Guelph, should she choose to look at this act, it says "a person," a supervisor, to take control and manage the operations. That's under subsection 7(1.1) of the act.

Once again, why do I call this legislation a red herring? Because it is nothing more than a foil for the minister to say, "I didn't have the ability to step in." It's covering up her failure to do her job; that's what it is.

Speaker, I want to go to the issue of whistle-blower protection that supposedly is being afforded in this legislation. We've called for whistle-blower protection.

1730

I read the legislation. I'm not sure the member from Guelph has. Here's what it says:

"Whistle-blowing protection

"7.7(1) No person shall retaliate against another person, whether by action or omission, or threaten to do so because,

"(a) anything has been disclosed...."

But then it goes on to say "anything has been disclosed"—to whom? Listen, Speaker: "to an inspector, investigator or special investigator in connection with a designated air ambulance service...."

Speaker, those are the very people that employees and suppliers have been going to about Ornge for the last three years, and none of these people have listened to them. And so now we've got whistle-blower protection that is so narrow, that doesn't apply, and it certainly doesn't give any sense of confidence to the people who we need to hear from. And so, we have a piece of legislation. The minister can get up, the parliamentary assistant can get up and say, "Oh, we're going to give you whistle-blower protection." There won't be one whistle blower under this protection, or so-called protection, and that's why we will be submitting amendments to strengthen this.

True whistle-blower protection, if they wanted to be serious about this, would have provided for a formalized process that absolutely welcomes anyone into the process. It should be overseen by the Ombudsman so that whoever comes forward through that whistle-blower protection has the assurance that there won't be retaliation and has the assurance that they actually will be listened to. This is nothing more than a red herring, and for that reason, we can't support it in its current form. We will be presenting the minister with some recommendations.

Speaker, I want to leave some time for my colleague, but I do want to just close with these thoughts. I still don't understand why every minister in this government and every backbencher in this government is taking the

defensive posture that they are. I want them to consider their actions, and I'd like them to consider just these few points.

First, with regard to this scandal, there was an initial policy decision to sign over the entire air ambulance service, as I said, of the province to one Dr. Chris Mazza for the consideration of \$1. We don't know what the rationale was as to why there wasn't a more open process and why Minister Smitherman didn't invite a more transparent process that would have actually allowed us to move into the consolidation of our air ambulance service on a solid footing.

Second, the internal decision process of the government around this process was riddled with a great deal of confusion. We have been able to table at the committee the fact that senior bureaucrats had serious concerns about this process and about the way this agreement was being drafted.

Third, it's apparent that once the policy decision was made and the performance agreement was put in place, the government failed at all levels to enforce the very terms of the agreement that they drafted. They had the ability to do that; they failed to do it, notwithstanding the fact that \$112 million a year—and it actually built up over the last number of years to the point where it's now \$150 million a year—is being transferred from the Ministry of Health into this organization called Ornge, without any oversight, without any accountability.

Speaker, the minister said she had no control? All she had to do was turn the taps off. All she had to do was say, "No, we're putting a stop-payment on your cheque, Dr. Mazza." "Board of directors, you don't want to comply? You don't want to change the performance agreement? Guess what? No money tomorrow." That would have gotten their attention real fast.

But, you know, they were asleep at the switch; either that, or they were convinced, through some very strong and effective lobbying, to turn the other way and allow these people to do what they wanted to do. Allow them to collect their \$1.4 million in salaries, allow the board of directors to collect \$200,000 a year from a public entity—and by the way, do you care? Does the government care that that took place? I can tell you, Speaker, the taxpayers care a great deal, and the taxpayers want to know why the Minister of Health—if she felt that there was a problem with incorporation, if she felt there was a problem with the performance agreement, why didn't she just put a stop-payment on the cheque?

Speaker, even the Premier, the ministers, the deputy ministers and an entire platoon of political advisers who were called into briefings about the plans that Ornge had to spawn a group of for-profit companies and to siphon health care dollars into those for-profit companies—not a single one of them raised concerns about those plans.

I don't know about you; there isn't a person that I talk to in my constituency, whether they be a business person or whether they be a janitor or whether it's a housewife—when they see what has happened here, there isn't one of them who doesn't say, "Who allowed this to

happen? And why didn't someone say no? Or why didn't somebody at least say, 'Wait a minute. I think we may have a problem here. Let's have a discussion about it?'" But not even that.

Now, the more that we hear and the further that we get into our public hearings, the more evident it becomes that some very, very powerful people who are friends of the Liberal Party were involved in this process. I can tell you that it's interesting that the former chief of staff to the Premier was retained by a law firm to give them advice on how to best communicate their wants and their plans to the government. Maybe that was just coincidence.

Isn't it interesting that it was the president of the Liberal Party of Canada who ended up being not only a lawyer, an adviser, a spokesperson—

**Interjection:** A lobbyist.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** —and a lobbyist, although he denied that at our committee. I asked him four times, "Did you lobby?" "No, I didn't lobby. I didn't lobby anybody." You know, the Integrity Commissioner of our province and the registrar of lobbyists actually has a different opinion of that and advised him of that in writing. We'll have to deal with that, and we will deal with that, because that is a perfect example of someone, under oath, saying one thing, and it turns out not to be true. So we'll deal with that.

Finally, Speaker, I think that we have to deal with this in the best way that we know how. We are members of the opposition here, and what we were hoping was that on this issue, we would find common ground with the government and that we could work together, that we could call in those who are responsible, that we together would find out who knew what and when, and that there would be consequences for those people, not because we relish that there be consequences, but because it's our responsibility to ensure that there are consequences for those who break the public trust, and that is what happened here.

So we're here, debating legislation. I say again that this legislation is nothing less than a defence by the minister to cover the fact that she failed in her oversight responsibilities. We see through it; the public will see through it.

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The legislation before us is not necessary. There are some areas that we'll participate with amendments, to at least strengthen that. The performance agreement changes weren't necessary, but if they want a new and improved agreement, so be it.

Speaker, I want to close with these comments. I want to express sincere appreciation to those front-line people at Ornge who were there in the past. Some of those individuals left of their own accord because they could no longer stomach what they saw. They could no longer be part of the abuse of public dollars. There are others who were let go because they dared to say something about what they saw, and they were fired. And there are those who are still there and who are so wanting to come forward and tell us what they know, not in any vindictive



way but because they want to do their part to restore confidence in our air ambulance service.

I want to thank the paramedics. I want to thank the pilots. I want to thank the administrators. I want to thank the dispatchers and the engineers who are on the front lines of our air ambulance service. I want to say to them: We will stand with you and we will ensure that the truth gets known. We'll ensure that we restore the integrity of our air ambulance service and we'll do whatever it takes in this place on their behalf and on behalf of the Ontario public who rely on this important service.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Speaker.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no, he's splitting his time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Would the member for Durham like to help me out?

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to share time with my colleague Mr. Klees from Newmarket-Aurora for his excellent leadership and due diligence on this matter on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario. I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services. This bill is a result of the financial and operational irregularities at Ontario's air ambulance service, better known as the Ornge scandal, a scandal that involves bloated executive salaries, operational deficiencies and, most shameful of all, compromised patient care.

After reviewing the bill, I have to say that it's a red herring, albeit an orange red herring. Shamefully, it is nothing more than an attempt to divert attention from a scandal that could prove to be one of the biggest in our province's history, perhaps even more wasteful than the billion-dollar boondoggle—eHealth—that this Liberal government also has on their hands.

It also reads like a knee-jerk reaction to the years-long fiasco at Ornge: serious breaches of public trust that the Liberal side of this House—namely, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance and the Premier—have tried to dodge and hide. They blindly defend an organization that was siphoning scarce health care dollars into a web of for-profit companies. Not until the scandalous goings-on behind the Ornge walls were exposed to the media did the minister attempt to take any kind of action. Even then, she tried to sidestep by claiming she was powerless.

We don't have the whole truth yet. We can assume we're just at a tipping point of what's shaping up to be one of the province's biggest scandals and boondoggles. And what lies underneath this crisis is no doubt a colossal competency crisis of the minister in charge, a minister who claims ignorance, that she did not know, in spite of the fact that questions were first raised here in this Legislature one year ago, in April 2011; a minister with a dodgy excuse, the false claim that the nature of the advice she received assured her of no crisis at Ornge, in spite of the fact that she had a detailed written appeal for her intervention from the Ontario Air Transport Associa-

tion. But even more damning is the continuing failure of her and her government to fess up and admit what and when they knew.

My colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex, Rick Nicholls, often says in this House, "When you mess up, fess up." Fess up; absolutely. Very simple. Bill 50 is proof of this deep cynicism and proof of a failed leadership at the Ministry of Health.

The bill's single biggest weakness is a so-called whistle-blower protection section, which fails to protect some of the very people who are in the best position to report fraud, waste and abuse, and health and safety violations.

Firstly, it fails by not providing across-the-board protection for whistle-blowers. Secondly, it fails by imposing limits on which individuals are protected and whom they can approach with information. So why should we believe, after the first fiasco, anything will change?

What is needed is a process that will not only safeguard the whistle-blower, but will also instill confidence that their concerns will be taken seriously. The Ombudsman should be engaged to assist in developing that process and should be integral to a formalized whistle-blower reporting process, if this is to have any meaningful effect.

I want to talk about some of the red flags—not orange; red flags—raised by our Ornge whistle-blowers; namely, the whistle-blower who warned the Ministry of Health about Ornge deceit in 2008. An Ornge accountant blew the whistle in 2008, telling the province that the publicly funded Ornge was handing out money like water. The whistle-blower put his issues in writing to provincial officials and was interviewed by investigators in November 2008. Then the health ministry told him the next month that the problems were solved; it's all okay.

Helicopters' tail rotors falling off—Mr. Speaker, an ambulance service should be helping and protecting health care, not creating business for themselves.

Ornge's Dr. Mazza paid \$144 million to an Italian helicopter company for 12 helicopters, the Agusta-Westland model 139 choppers, even though these helicopters were flagged for safety concerns. I should admit and share with the House as well, they were even designed so that the paramedics when, in need, couldn't get over top of the patient to perform that perhaps life-sensitive care. This deal personally enriched Dr. Mazza and others by about \$6.7 million.

This bill should be an opportunity for the Minister of Health to create a culture of ethics and integrity. However, the only way to do that is to protect the employees by fostering a workplace where they can report misconduct without the fear of reprisal.

So, before you ask employees to come forward with allegations of waste and fraud and violations, you have to guarantee that you will, firstly, value them; secondly, protect them; and, finally, if there's a problem, you will take appropriate and timely action. I question that this current Minister of Health has the will to do that.

Just earlier today, a member of her government, the member from Willowdale, referred to an Ornge witness as “crazy.” This is unparliamentary, disrespectful and does not help this serious debate. It’s apparent this government has no genuine will to get to the bottom of the Ornge scandal, to go beyond the findings of the Auditor General.

The Auditor General’s special report, a 42-page-long indictment of Ornge and this government, this Liberal government, among other things revealed shady real estate deals and a very complex, well-thought-out and tangled web of deception.

Rent payments 40% higher than the fair market rent is just one example. Another is the so-called “crystal palace” real estate deal, on which Auditor General Jim McCarter wrote:

“The building that houses Ornge’s corporate head office was purchased for \$15 million using funding borrowed through a bond issue. Ornge then entered into a complex arrangement with some of the other entities it created to sell the building and lease it back to itself. An independent real estate appraiser” was engaged and “estimated that, under its lease with a related Ornge company, Ornge’s rent payments”—as stated earlier—“are 40% higher than the fair-market rent. Over the first five years of the 25-year lease, this amounts to Ornge paying \$2 million more than it would pay if the building’s cost per square foot were comparable to that of similar buildings in the area. Ornge’s above-market rent enabled one of the entities involved in the arrangement, Ornge Global Real Estate, to obtain \$24 million in financing for the building that Ornge paid \$15 million for. We understand that the \$9 million ‘profit’ generated as a result was being flowed to a company called Ornge Global Holdings LP for Ornge’s future purchase of limited partnership (ownership) units of that company. At the time of our audit, Ornge Global Holdings LP was owned by members of Ornge’s senior management and the board.”

And \$700 million of taxpayers’ money has been spent on Ornge since 2005, and there is a yet-to-be-determined number on the millions of dollars that may have been used for personal gain.

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So, in light of the Auditor General’s scathing report on Ornge, in light of the scathing news stories peppered with more explosive evidence every day, I ask the members opposite, the Liberals, to consider how their conduct fares in the public’s eye and to consider what the court of public opinion says about the lack of response from the Premier, the minister, their cabinet, the backbenchers—their party. Certainly, they have no confidence, and neither do we—no confidence that this new layer of legislation will do anything to restore confidence in what is an essential emergency health care service. Only competent leadership can bring about that confidence.

It is becoming almost a daily mention from the Minister of Health in this House that we need to do better. This is simply unacceptable. The public needs to know that the government is bringing their A game when

it comes to their health care. “We will do better” just doesn’t cut it. They didn’t deliver the first time around; why would they this time?

Bringing forward this meaningless bill and boasting that this will bring about the changes necessary to restore that confidence only confirms to us that the minister does not grasp the depth of the issues that are the core of the problems at Ornge and that she and her government are more concerned about self-preservation than ensuring the integrity of one of our essential health care services.

If it wasn’t so, they would have moved ahead with the setting up of a select committee to investigate Ornge, as was the will of this House and as was agreed by the minister. We still await her to honour that commitment. A select committee will allow more Ornge witnesses to come forward with information and be allowed time to speak on their concerns; it will allow us to get to the truth. As long as the government House leader refuses to respect the will of this Legislature to strike a select committee into Ornge, we will not get to the bottom of this scandal.

This bill is nothing more than an attempt to divert attention away from the fact that the minister has had the power to appoint a supervisor and/or inspector from the very beginning of the Ornge saga. It’s deplorable that the minister didn’t step up to the plate and do it right from day one, when she had the ability. The minister had the power to intervene at Ornge under the original Ornge performance agreement as well as the Independent Health Facilities Act. Article 15 of the original performance agreement gave her powers of intervention. Why, Minister, did you not step up? Why are you now bringing more legislation to slow things down and dampen all of the thought process of those people who want to step up and do the right thing? It’s shameful.

It’s a shame that the Premier, the cabinet and the Liberal MPPs are not as committed as we are to get to the bottom of this scandal. Why don’t they want to find out what happened and to ensure that those responsible are held accountable? It’s a significant premise that we should all be working towards when we come to this House every day—and, most importantly, to determine what has to be done to restore confidence in our air ambulance service.

That’s our objective, and we intend to get there. We owe that to the Ontario public. We owe that to the front-line staff of our air ambulance service—the paramedics, the pilots, the engineers, the dispatchers, the maintenance crews and the administrative staff—who are dedicated to provide an essential health care service to the people of this province.

The Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance and the Premier blindly have defended an organization siphoning scarce health dollars from a much-needed service that all of us benefit from—or, in this case, when they’re wasting money, we honestly don’t benefit from, and that’s absolutely shameful. This was raised here in this Legislature in April of last year, and we still haven’t been able to get them to agree to get to the bottom of the truth and move on.



The Minister of Health and her ministry officials ignored warnings from employees and stakeholders about numerous things: financial irregularities, contraventions of prescribed procurement policies and operational problems. The staff noticed it. The staff picked up on it. They came. As we heard earlier in this court today, one of the corporate lawyers involved knew, and suggested that she would have known all of those facts and details. Yet, in this room, she denies that. She continues to turn a blind eye. We can't step aside. The Premier knows this and he, every day, doesn't even step aside; he just shunts it off to the House leader—unacceptable. Stand up and take your medicine.

Do you know what? It's shameful that until the media—I think Mr. Klees mentioned this as well. Frank and others in this House have brought it to the attention of the government, and they just shoved it aside, like most things. They pretend that they operate by another separate set of rules. Their arrogance suggests that they have a majority still. It's not true; we have a minority Parliament that needs to be respected.

She said she was powerless, that she couldn't do anything, and yet, right in the document that she approved, it says that she did have the power to step in. She just did not have the will and the competency to step up and do the honourable thing, sir.

Both documents, the first bill and now this one, are nothing more than a cynical attempt to divert attention from the government's failure to exercise its oversight responsibilities. At the end of the day, the people of Ontario expect all of us in this House to come to work and do the best of our job to protect their interests; to protect, most importantly, their health care and ensure that their hard-earned tax dollars aren't wasted on scandals like eHealth and gas plants that we don't build and then we do build and we don't build. It's unbelievable, the money we waste—not we; the Liberal government. I want to emphasize: the Liberal government and the waste that they have. The eHealth boondoggle—now this one. Where's this one going to go? I do think that this could become the biggest scandal this province has ever seen—absolutely deplorable, Speaker.

The Minister of Health had both the contractual and the legislative authority to intervene, but in failing to act on that authority, she failed the people of this province. She allowed our air ambulance service to be hijacked by a gang of self-serving, unethical, highly powered and well-connected political insiders.

We've been asking the minister to step aside, to accept responsibility for her lack of leadership, her lack of decisiveness in restoring confidence to the people of Ontario; to do the honourable thing and step down. Instead, she continues to make excuses, she lays blame on others and now attempts to hide under a blanket of legislation and yet another piece of paper. And that, according to the minister, should give all of us comfort that all will be well. Well, we're calling the bluff. It hasn't been well for a long time, it's not well today, and

we have no confidence that it's going to be better tomorrow because of this piece of legislation.

I submit, Speaker—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Have a glass of water.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Jeff. That's great. It's nice to see that you do care.

It's my auctioneer skills coming in, Speaker. You get on a roll, and you want to roll. I'm very passionate about this issue. This is something that is very detrimental to the people of Ontario. We need to get to the heart of this matter. We need to ensure that those helicopters are going to actually save people instead of bringing pain and suffering to them. No amount of legislation will prevent a recurrence of another Ornge scandal fiasco within the Ministry of Health or any other ministry. It's people: people who have responsibility and need to exercise that level of responsibility. They need to show their integrity by doing the right thing, Speaker.

Just as the Minister of Health failed to act on the contractual and legislative authority she had, she will fail to act on the authority of this new legislation. Just as several ministry departments and branches failed in their inspection and enforcement mandate under the existing legislation, they will fail under this new legislation. A piece of paper and a bunch of words are going to do nothing if the actual character and the actual concern that people put into their jobs do not change. At this point, we do not feel comfortable that there has been much change. They've left most of the people at the top of the pyramid who were involved the first time around still sitting in their plush chairs. What's going to change culturally if you don't get rid of those people? It's unbelievable that they won't step up and take accountability for this.

We don't need more legislation and regulations. Those Liberals have put in more regulations and legislation now than we can actually choke down. We're scaring businesses out of this province at a clip that we can't handle, and they want to add yet more regulations and legislation so that they can hide behind it. It's just indicative of a lack of leadership on the other side of the floor.

What we do need, however, is competence and responsible leadership; both have been found very wanting on the part of the Minister of Health, the Premier, the Minister of Finance—in fact, your whole caucus, for not stepping up. Not one of you has stepped up and asked the hard questions even of your own house. You need to be able to do that. If people are going to have trust and believe in you, you need to do the right thing—all of you.

The question we ask on behalf of Ontarians, Speaker, is: What has changed? What's really going to change other than another document to spin their tale a different way and to take time out of getting more people who really need to come forth with the proper answers?

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 26 April 2012

Jeudi 26 avril 2012

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

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Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 26 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 26 avril 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## WEARING OF PINS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The chief government whip on a point of order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would move unanimous consent that we can all wear our daffodils in honour of the Canadian Cancer Society and the event that they are holding here today at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Unanimous consent has been requested. Do we agree? Agreed.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 25, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased to respond to the member from Wellington-Halton Hills, Mr. Arnott. I wasn't here for all of his remarks, but I'm quite confident in saying that he felt that the emphasis should be placed on Bill 14. Bill 14 was the initial bill that was introduced by our member from Kitchener-Waterloo, Ms. Witmer. Ms. Witmer had worked for over two years to bring together some clear definitions. I believe that the member from Wellington-Halton Hills was, in his remarks, respecting that. We know that Bill 14 is before the committee now, and I think it's in some kind of procedural—but what we want here is to end bullying. We don't need to be bullying each other in this process of Bill 13 and Bill 14. What we need to do is find consensus. Initially, it was my impression that they would work together, the minister and Ms. Witmer, and try to get it right. Most of the comments I've heard from the public—they see it in a

balanced way of not prioritizing any form of bullying, but respecting that all students need to be protected from any form of bullying.

The member from Wellington-Halton Hills, I believe, made a very good point: The ideal solution here is to put Bill 13 into committee with Bill 14. I know there will be further remarks this morning on this, because everyone in this Legislature wants to have a role in ending bullying and making our schools a safer place for all—not just these students, but for all people, whatever exposure they have. I think if you clarify it, there's no agenda in Bill 14 at all that I'm aware of, other than protecting children from bullying and setting up a process of accountability and a reporting mechanism for the school boards to clarify that that would happen. With that respect, I look for others' remarks on Bill 13 and ask them to look at Bill 14. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It is really my great desire to believe the sincerity of the party opposite, but it's hard to, sometimes. I was very proudly standing here with all of my colleagues on this side to vote for Bill 14, their party bill—no fuss, no muss, right to committee; we said this was important. When it got to committee—I haven't been here as long as the member for Durham, but it didn't take me long to figure out how to read the rule book. And when you go to committee, if the same matter in substance is before the House—

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** You could have done it through the subcommittee.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I didn't interrupt you, sir, and I would like the same courtesy, especially coming from you, Jim.

They cannot have it. Rather than dealing with the substance of the matter, which is more important in getting this bill to committee—that would also be extremely helpful.

Second, Bill 14 is a very good bill. You have not heard people on this side criticize it. Bill 13 is a very good bill. As a matter of fact, they're complementary bills. I have heard the opposition with some of the most ridiculous pieces.

The member for Durham also made the comment—which, quite frankly, I find quite disturbing. The biggest cause of bullying is the impression that kids are gay or lesbian or transgendered or in fact that they are—overwhelming statistics. The suicide rates among gay and lesbian youth are running 30% higher.

When I was in school, I played football, I was president of student council. I didn't get bullied because I



figured out that the most common thing I ever heard was, "That's so gay." My poor friend Geoff Creighton, who was not gay, got beaten up. He was tall, he had red hair, he was a straight young kid, grew up to have a family, but he was a little awkward-looking, a little effeminate, so he was the one who was sort of the gay kid in class.

The other thing is, we're not prioritizing gays. There are people out there who said, "You can't have a gay-straight alliance." They don't say you can't have a straight alliance. No one's saying you can't have a black kids' alliance. Not—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

The member from Wellington–Halton Hills has two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** It's an interesting process we have here, when a member speaks to an issue the day before and, if the House adjourns, we then have questions and comments the next day. I'm not sure the member for Durham had an opportunity to hear what I did say yesterday, but I appreciate his comments. I'm not sure if the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities was here for my speech yesterday, but I appreciate his comments as well. But it is always interesting to have these kinds of things. Again, I would thank the members for their responses to my comments yesterday.

The fact is that Bill 14, the bill that was brought forward by the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, was passed by this House on March 29. I spoke in favour of it. It has been languishing in the Standing Committee on Social Policy since that time. I realize there are some procedural issues but, again, I would encourage the government to get moving on Bill 14. I think there have been a number of expressions of confidence in that bill on both sides of the House, obviously, including the Premier's public statement in the newspaper a few weeks ago.

I would commend the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, former Minister of Education, former Deputy Premier, former school board trustee, a long-serving member of this House. She studied this issue for many, many months, if not years, to bring forward a comprehensive bill that covers off the whole issue. I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is a superior bill and would in fact address the issues that are of concern to all of us. I would suggest that it should be the bill that is passed by this Legislature in its current form.

But at the same time, there is debate on Bill 13, and the government is continuing to call it for debate. There has been, I believe, 15 hours of debate. The government accuses us of delaying it, but the fact is, we're doing our job in opposition and there's a significant number of members of our caucus who wish to speak to this important issue so that we make sure we get it right.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence this morning in terms of listening to my follow-up remarks and I look forward to the continued debate on Bill 13 and Bill 14. Thank you very much.

0910

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from York–Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** It's my pleasure to be able to join the debate this morning. I think that one of the things that has happened in the development of Bill 13 and Bill 14 is, sadly, a huge growth in awareness of the extent of the problem. We know that people have been dealing with this in isolation and on their own through a mixed bag of resources and protocols and things like that, but it's very clear from the two bills, Bill 13 and Bill 14, that the time has come for it to be much more organized.

I want to just step back a bit and think about how did we get to this point, and when does it start? I remember asking my mother about the question of kids fighting in the schoolyard—nothing is new. I said, "But what is different? Why is it that it seems to be such a more difficult issue, and frankly more damaging?" Her answer was quite interesting. She said, "Well, there were always kids who would get into fistcuffs with each other, usually boys," but I'm not going to go there. But she said, "What was different was that everybody would stand around and watch, and the idea that you would need someone else to come in on your behalf, so it was two against one or five against one, was absolutely wrong. It was a demonstration of your cowardliness, and you would not want anybody to think that you couldn't stand up for yourself." I sort of tucked that away for a while, because I started to think about it in terms of what has now become a much more serious issue of numbers, in terms of involvement.

I want to tell another little story that I think demonstrates how these things can start. A friend of my daughter's in public school was about six feet tall. You can imagine that to be six feet in grade 7 certainly made you stand out in the group, and some of the kids started calling her Tree. She was very unhappy about this, because obviously it brought attention to something about which she already felt very self-conscious.

My daughter happened to mention one time about her friend Tree. I said, "Whose idea was it to call her Tree? Was it hers?" "Well, no." My daughter is quite short and was very self-conscious about being short, and I said to her, "So it will be okay if Tree calls you Stump." That put an entirely different focus on what, quite frankly, wasn't meant in a particularly malicious way. This was her friend, and this was her nickname. But it obviously had an impact on her and was something about which she felt very self-conscious. Let me assure you that Tree and Stump are both friends now, but neither refers to the other in that pejorative way.

I think that over time what has happened is that, at the risk of opening up another can of worms, we seem to see more of a kind of group think. So if somebody comes up with a decision about someone, whether they're too fat or too thin or they have red hair or they have a funny name or any number of things people could find that distinguish that person, then you have the escalation of group think. The other part of it is that we have the problem of this escalation, as people then become more marginalized by whatever has been the initial act.

So it's everyone's responsibility, I would argue, to look for opportunities. I realize, as I think back on it, that

the innocence of my daughter telling me the story about Tree gave me a really good defining moment in which to throw it back on her as to her size, which she liked to be identified by. So it is everyone's responsibility. It certainly is parents, the daycares and the schools, but it's the schools that we're looking at here and the importance of providing a mechanism for assisting—and I want to emphasize—both the perpetrator and the victim.

A final story on the importance of the perpetrator and the kind of need that they may have: I had a student who had the reputation, justifiably, of beating up other kids. She was warned by the school that the next time she did that she would face consequences in the legal system. You just can't go around even threatening, and certainly not beating up, anyone.

So I had a reasonably good relationship with her and I said, "What are you doing? Come on, you're too big. That's something kids do maybe in kindergarten, but you're in grade 10. What are you doing beating up?" And she turned on me and she said, "Well, what do you do when you're mad?" And I thought, "Uh-oh, this is the problem." Of course, in conversation with her it turned out that in her family experience everyone who was bigger than anyone else got a chance to beat up whoever was smaller. That was the way you solved problems and established your hierarchy.

When I think back on her story I think this was certainly a time when help was required. Her experiences then were something that, clearly, gave her the opportunity to express herself. She had no suite of options as to what to say when she was mad; all she knew was to beat up whoever happened to be handy.

There are a number of things, then, that I think are really important. There's been much conversation about the merits of Bills 13 and 14, and I want to make sure that I have time to do that. But the bigger issue for us as parliamentarians is the importance of having a select committee on Ornge, and I want to move adjournment of the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from York-Simcoe has moved adjournment of the debate. Agreed? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those against, say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 0918 to 0948.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would all members please take their seats.

Ms. Munro has moved adjournment of the debate. All in favour, please stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Those against, please stand and remain standing.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 20; the nays are 33.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion lost.

Ms. Munro.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I want to use the time remaining just to talk very briefly about the role of Karen Sebben, who is a constituent of mine in York-Simcoe and the founder of the York Region Anti-Bullying Coalition. In advocating for Bill 14, she says, "My son's three years of bullying took the form of homophobia. But as parents, it didn't matter to us what form the bullying took. The fact remains that aggression and assault were taking place regardless of the reason. This is the focus of any anti-bullying legislation, and the PCs' Elizabeth Witmer got it right with Bill 14."

I also want to, in the moment that remains, refer to a part of Bill 14 that I think is an important omission in Bill 13, and that's the question of cyberbullying. This takes bullying to new heights. This means that it's 24/7, that it is relentless, and it is in that spirit that we have to look at the merits of Bill 14 as well as Bill 13.

I would just conclude by saying that it's important that we get it right, it's important that we get the best piece of legislation, because we owe our children, at the very least, a safe environment.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased to stand and rise and support the member from York-Simcoe, a former teacher. I was quite impressed how she related it in a personal way to her daughter and her friend. I think they should refer to them, that story, Tree and Stump, one being tall, one being short.

It's in that vein when we can relate this to our lives, our own personal lives. I was always called tall because I was so short. No, we won't go into that self-deprecating mode but I think that's what this is about: showing respect for our differences. That's really a theme that I think we can all agree on, and that's what I'd like to leave—I think Mrs. Munro's remarks were in that vein. Trying to find more things that we could agree on in this House, in this Legislature, is a good signal to the pages who are here, to the youth or the educators that might be listening or watching and trying to understand.

What I do have a problem with, though, is the fact that we have been trying to establish a select committee to deal with scandalous waste. Mr. Klees, the member from Newmarket-Aurora, made a very impassioned speech yesterday. I would refer people to the Hansard of yesterday with respect to Bill 50, which is a bill from the Ministry of Health dealing with ambulances. In that, he was refuting a lot of stuff that the bill was artificially putting on the table. What we've been calling for, procedurally, is a select committee of this Legislature of all parties to deal with the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the member to direct his comments to the previous speaker.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you very much. I'll get to that as well—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Actually, get to it right away.



**Mr. John O'Toole:**—get to deal with the fact that this Bill 13 is—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:**—Bill 13, I've said it twice now—a select committee to deal with Ornge—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to respond to the comments by the member from York-Simcoe on Bill 13, the anti-bullying bill. I was very pleased to hear the member's comments because I think she recognized that what we need to do is take the bill, Bill 14, from the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, who the members on this side of the House supported. I know that the Minister of Education and the member from Kitchener-Waterloo have been working very closely on how to merge Bill 13 and Bill 14, and I thank the member for York-Simcoe for recognizing that the two bills really need to be merged.

But the problem is, we can't merge these two bills at committee if every time we try to have a debate and actually get Bill 13 passed, what we have is bells ringing, because time after time after time, when Bill 13 has been called for debate, what we've ended up with is 30 minutes of bells ringing about something that has absolutely nothing to do with Bill 13. Although I must say, what I'm really beginning to understand is that the members opposite in the official opposition actually can't agree that we need to compromise, so as a front they're ringing bells. We want to compromise on this. Please pass Bill 13 and get both bills into committee so we can actually compromise. We can't compromise if you keep ringing bells.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I would like to congratulate the member for York-Simcoe on her remarks on Bill 13. I think that she made some passionate points that reflect some of her background on the issue, and experience and discussions with actual students who have been bullied. Those are important stories that I think all members have, at some point, experienced or seen, and I think it's important that we acknowledge those ideas.

I also want to reference, since the member for Guelph referenced proceeding and moving forward—you know, I think it's just a simple request. The reason why these bells have been ringing has absolutely nothing to do with Bill 13. What it has to do with is that we have to seek some co-operation on seeing through what the will of the House actually has been, which is that we had a motion on this floor that wants to see a select committee on Ornge, which we simply haven't seen to date—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the member to restrict his comments to the previous speaker.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just referring to, in reference to the comments from the member for Guelph—I think we need to, to the greatest extent possible, set politics aside. Bullying is about the kids, it's about the children, and certainly in my comments on this bill that we've talked about—

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** So they're just collateral damage, right? You ring the bells and they're collateral damage.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister of Agriculture, would you come to order, please.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** The heckling that we're seeing from that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is exemplary of the kind of bullying that we've seen from that side. All I would ask is that we seek a little bit of co-operation in terms of trying to get these things moved forward. Certainly they have no interest in that co-operation, Mr. Speaker. I think that exemplifies the kind of bullying that we've been seeing since last October.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I only have two minutes to make comments. I think the opposition, by ringing the bells—it is a form of bullying. A bully wants to get their way. I remember that in school. We had bullies like everyone else would have, and the bullies wanted their way. I have nephews and nieces, and they tell me about the environment now in schools. Someone will steal someone's iPod or iPhone because they want it themselves. They want to have it for themselves. Or they'll steal someone's lunch because they don't have a lunch or they know that the lunch of the person being bullied is better than their lunch.

I remember in school so many incidents. I remember someone who came into the same classroom that I was in. People knew that he was gay. The teacher stepped out for a bit, and what happened was that a textbook was thrown from the back of the room and hit this person who was gay right in the back of the head. He got up, picked up his binders, left the room and never came back again. We were studying King Lear at that time; I remember it very well. It was a King Lear textbook, hardcover, and it was just thrown right into the back of the head. The person, unfortunately, had to leave. So what we're trying to do is eliminate that in this bill, so that people can live in a free and just society, without having people attack—verbally, physically or by any other means—someone that may be vulnerable.

The world has changed a lot. The United States is discussing the same issue, the very same issue. Society is advancing, becoming more aware of these issues. That's why this bill's important. We all have the right to an education, we all have the right to move freely, and we're addressing that in this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member for York-Simcoe, you have two minutes for a response.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I wish to thank the members for Durham, Guelph, Cambridge and Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask for your indulgence. In fact, in the comments and questions, there seem to be mixed messages here between the use of bells and the actual piece of legislation, so I'm going to respond to

those as well. I think, perhaps, that it is what I said: a mixed message.

1000

We have a very serious issue on the floor of this chamber: the question of Bill 13 and the question of Bill 14. No one, I think, misunderstands that we also have a very serious issue in the need for a select committee. The bells are simply an opportunity to demonstrate the dissatisfaction of the opposition, and serve as a reminder of the need to look at the issue of Ornge. I certainly don't think that I mixed those messages in my remarks.

The important thing, I think, is how I left my comments, which were on the value of a safe environment. We spend a great deal of money and time on various other methods of making sure our children have a safe environment. We have what are notionally referred to as "the helicopter parents." Well, I think that it's time to look at the issue of those children who are identified, for whatever reason, as outsiders, as being different. That's what this bill is all about—both of them—and it is an opportunity for us to move forward on something that is so important.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill 13 in the time that I have. There are a number of issues that I wish to bring forward that I hope the government will be able to pay attention to. There are some issues I want to bring to their attention, as there are a number of questions that haven't been answered as of yet.

I can recall, and each of us has mentioned, many aspects of our lives that have come forward that have actually been part of our building blocks in order to make us individuals and stronger. I can recall being in grade 9, walking home, and I happened to see an individual I knew who was in grade 9 being picked on by two older kids in grade 12. He was walking away as best he could, and these kids picked on him and just punched him. I didn't know what to do. I have to tell you, he just continued to walk, and he was almost in tears doing the very best he could. I never, ever forgot that moment. As a matter of fact, it was about a year and a half ago when I met the individual again, and I apologized to him for not standing up for him at that time.

Although I was intimidated by the bullies that were picking on the individual, I didn't have the courage or the understanding of what process to go by which to assist in the situation. But what took place, though, Mr. Speaker, was that I brought it upon myself that I wouldn't allow it to happen to other children or other kids if it was ever in my presence again.

As a result of that, later on while in high school, I was working, believe it or not, as a chicken picker on a chicken farm. There was one tough guy that was picking on all the little kids in there, because they brought everybody in of any age. What we'd do is load chickens in the bins to be carried off to—this particular place was Colonel Sanders. Anyway, one kid was picking on one of the

young guys there, and he thought it was great fun and all the other kids were laughing at him. I told myself, as I did when I saw the individual in grade 9 being picked on, that I wouldn't let it happen. I went over, I picked him up and I held him up against the ceiling of the top floor of that chicken barn and I said, "You ever pick on that kid again and you're going to deal with me." He stopped. Nobody ever did, and nobody ever picked on anybody while I was in there ever again.

Not only that, but later on while I was playing hockey, I can recall we were playing some pick-up shinny hockey and there was one guy that was a pretty good skater. He felt great pride in checking and flattening every single kid that he could there, because he was a big, tough guy. The next shift, I went out and I warned him. I said, "Don't ever do it again." He went out and continued on, he thought, in defiance. Well, the next time I had a chance, I completely levelled him, and he said, "What did you do that for?" I said, "How do you think he likes it and he likes it? Don't ever do it again." He was doing it to intimidate the other kids.

What happened, though, Mr. Speaker, is what I'm trying to express here: that as a result of the bullying actions, it builds stronger characters in those individuals who are willing to stand up for those individuals being bullied. Quite frankly, probably every one of us in here is standing up for beliefs that we have, and that's one of the reasons we came to Queen's Park.

Now, I want to go into some of the aspects in regard to the specifics of the bill. I'm going to read a couple things that I'll specifically reference: "All Canadians are ... on an equal footing; whether they are Quebecers, Albertans, French, English, Jewish, Hindu, they all have the same rights. No one is special. All Canadians are equal, and that equality flows from the charter."

It goes on to mention a number of other aspects where it specifically says, "In my philosophy the community, an institution itself, has no rights. It has rights by delegation from the individuals. You give equality to the individuals and you give rights to the individuals. Then they will organize in societies to make sure that these rights are respected."

The individual goes on to talk about a hierarchy of rights, whereby the recognition of single entities or aspects that are mentioned in legislation are given a perceived hierarchy of rights, and that's one of the concerns here in Bill 13, that a hierarchy of rights is being established because one single aspect is mentioned where there are other aspects that are not mentioned.

Quite frankly, it's important for the individuals to know who it was who spoke that, because that was Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada at that time, who went into great depth and spoke about ensuring that all rights are equal.

Now, in this Bill 13, one of the aspects was—in my own riding, my old alma mater, R.S. McLaughlin Collegiate and Vocational Institute, in which I have great pride and which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, denied allowing to have a faith organization in the school because, according to the principal at that time,



religion was the basis of all wars in the world. That principal would not allow anything that promoted war in her school, and that organization was denied. So by mentioning certain organizations and others, there's a perceived hierarchy of rights that is being established within the legislation, and that's where a lot of individuals or groups have concerns about that.

Not only that. I met with senior officials from one of the largest, if not—well, quite frankly, it will be the largest implementer of the legislation in Bill 13, because there are certain aspects that already have it in place. The statement that was quite shocking was that, for the first time ever, they had never been consulted prior to the actual introduction of the legislation. The first time they ever heard anything about it was after it was introduced in the Legislature, and they had no ability to have comment or input on a consultation basis, which is the normal practice within this Legislature.

Quite frankly, they were very concerned and didn't know how to handle it, so they contacted me and asked, "What do we do and how do we go about this?" As a result of that action, a document was brought forward by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association called *Respecting Difference*. When you're respecting difference, it's the ability to come forward and ensure that the contents of it are reflective of all aspects being brought forward. It's an attempt to reach out, to say, "Look, we'll find an understanding on how we can work together and move forward." Quite frankly, they were very concerned about the whole thing in that they'd never had any ability to influence or been given an opportunity to have input on that.

Also, I should say that I, as many members do here, have met with principals in my riding. Quite frankly, I asked them when they came forward in regard to Bill 13 about the aspects of implementing it. Their comments were quite surprising to me. I found it rather interesting that they stated to me that they already had the authority to do what was taking place and being implemented in Bill 13. So I asked, then, why they would be bringing Bill 13 forward? They didn't have an answer. Quite possibly, the lack of consultation with the implementation organizations may be part of the reason. However, that's not for me to decide. It's for the implementers or the government who have moved the aspects forward.

I looked up under the Education Act and, according to section 306(1), it specifically states, "A principal shall consider whether to suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate...." What they stated to me was that that section allowed them to make sure that anything that took place regarding bullying could be dealt with at the school level.

Some of the aspects mentioned were:

"1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person.

"2. Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs.

"3. Being under the influence of alcohol.

"4. Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority.

"5. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school.

"6. Bullying."

So, under section 306 of the legislation, it already states that bullying is already enacted and that the principals of the schools have the authority, whether it's on or off school property, to enact the legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I realize there's a very limited amount of time here. There's another couple of things I wanted to mention. I was invited to a constitutional briefing at U of T on the legislation, and there was a significant number of concerns that were brought forward in regard to this. One of them, very specifically, was that, should Bill 13 be enacted in the way it is, it will effectively stop what's taking place in the riding of Oshawa, as in other locations. Pastor Jarret of the Affinity Church preaches at Norman G. Powers School—and this is one of the questions I am hoping the government will be able to answer and answer to these individuals. Bill 13, the way it has come out now, will disallow that church from practising in that school, at Norman G. Powers, as is the practice in many churches. They need to hear these answers to give them some security that they know they can continue on with this aspect, because they are very concerned about that.

Another aspect that was brought forward in that constitutional briefing at U of T was very specifically that under subsection 2(1), paragraph 29.1 of subsection 8(1) of the act is repealed. They give the example that the Toronto District School Board's EIE policy explicitly states that parents shall not be provided with advance notification of what material is being taught to their children, and that the parents shall not be permitted to withdraw their children from classes covering material which conflicts with their religious or moral beliefs.

Now, I understand that there is a potential court case in Hamilton—if it has not been brought forward—about to take place dealing with this because a parent tried to remove their child from the classes that they didn't believe were appropriate in accordance with their beliefs. I also understand that there is a Quebec precedent that was set in regard to this that had taken place. However, according to the constitutional lawyers who potentially will be dealing with this or are dealing with it now, they are substantially different in that the parent was completely denied and disallowed from removing their child from there.

There is a significant number of questions that need to be answered. Unfortunately, I only have a few seconds left. I appreciate the opportunity. I look forward to the bill moving forward to committee so that these issues can be brought forward and these people have the ability to come forward and get their questions answered about a serious aspect of our society.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'd like to take a moment to recognize a young man, Will White, from Akron University in Ohio, in the west members' gallery. Will has been an intern in my office here at Queen's Park for the past couple of months and he leaves Queen's Park tomorrow. Will's major project was working on a private member's bill, which I will look forward to introducing later in the term.

Based on our experience in working with Will, I can confidently say that he has a very bright and exciting future ahead of him. So on behalf of myself and my staff and, I hope, all of you at Queen's Park, I'd like to say great good luck to Will White.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I'd like to welcome Kevin Maloney. He's an individual who bid at a recent Rotary Club of Brampton-Heart Lake auction for charity, and he's having lunch with me today.

Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for all members to wear ribbons in recognition of the National Day of Mourning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I believe we have a unanimous consent request for wearing the ribbon for national mourning. Do we agree? Agreed.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would like to welcome today to Queen's Park Kathy Kennedy, representative of the Canadian Cancer Society in my riding of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, and thank her for the great work she does and the great work the society does there and elsewhere.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I am so pleased to introduce a huge delegation from the cancer society: John Atkinson, Julie Datta, Sharon Chandler, Mary Ransom; Cathy Burns, from Sudbury; Janice Hodgson, Lori Synes-Taraba, Joanne Di Nardo, Kate Neale; Diana Barclay-Neale, who happens to be Kate's mother; Mary Hobbs, Janice Cunningham, Linda Constant, Elizabeth Holmes, Lera Ryan, Maureen Tourangeau, and Lynne O'Neil. We also have Rowena Pinto, Sherri Cicirello, Shadi Mousavi Nia, Dave Nidumolu, Diana Barclay—sorry, introduced her already—Daniel Paquette, and I have Dr. Cheryl Rosen, and Martin Kabat, the CEO of the cancer society, Ontario division. They are all here today to support my private member's bill banning tanning beds.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** I, too, want to recognize some individuals from my riding of Niagara Falls who are here on behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society for MPP education week. In the east gallery we have Lori Taraba—thank you, Lori—and we have Angela Daley. I want to simply say, Mr. Speaker, as a survivor of cancer, thank you so much to the Canadian Cancer Society for all the good work that you do.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to introduce to you a friend of mine, Paul Howe from the community of Penetanguishene. Paul's here with the Canadian Cancer Society, and he's also a member of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and I think about 12 other community organizations in our area. Thank you very much for being here, Paul.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Of course, we're very fortunate to have Sarah McPherson here, page for the Thunder Bay-Atikokan riding. Today we also have her mother, Tracy Shields. I'd like you to welcome her. She's in the east gallery. Welcome, Tracy.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'm thrilled to welcome Sharon Burns. She's the manager of the Halton Canadian Cancer Society and she's also a Burlingtonian.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to welcome Margaret Eaton, the president and CEO of ABC Life Literacy, who's joining us in the members' gallery today, and I'd like to recognize the great work that their organization is doing to help the literacy cause in Canada.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm so happy to introduce a great friend of mine and a great friend to fighting cancer in this province. Maureen Tourangeau is here. She has been a lifelong volunteer with the Ottawa cancer society, which I used to be a board member with. I'm very happy she's at Queen's Park today.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I would like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature today Mary Ransom of the Canadian Cancer Society in Niagara.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a great pleasure for me today to welcome Helen Cole, president of the Sarnia Canadian Cancer Society. Accompanying her is Kilby McGarry, a recent volunteer to the Canadian Cancer Society. We welcome them to Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'd like to welcome Anita Record and Will Camm from the Peterborough branch of the Canadian Cancer Society, who are with us today.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** In the west members' gallery, I would like to welcome my lovely wife, Carole, and our friends Eva and Andrew Kordysz. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to welcome Janis Cunningham to the Legislature. She's a hard-working member of the Canadian Cancer Society in my riding.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'd ask all members to help me welcome Janice Hodgson, who is here representing the Holland River unit of the Canadian Cancer Society.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On behalf of the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan, supporting page Sarah McPherson is mother Tracy Shields—thank you very much—in the members' gallery.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO'S CREDIT RATING

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Two days ago our leader, Tim Hudak, and the



Ontario PC caucus voted against a budget that did nothing to save Ontario from a \$30-billion deficit, from further debt and more unemployment. We took that stand because we are worried about the future of our province. We took that stand because you did not take the urgent action that our province needs.

Yesterday's S&P negative outlook throws your government's incompetence in managing our province into high relief, Deputy Premier. In fact, Kevin O'Leary on The Lang and O'Leary Exchange yesterday had this to say regarding the downgrading: "This is further evidence that this government is probably past its shelf life."

With all indications to the contrary, can you still stand up here and claim that you and your budget are what Ontario needs?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, Standard and Poor's affirmed the credit rating and put Ontario on a negative outlook, and they cited the challenge of meeting our deficit targets, which this government is prepared to embrace, and we want to meet those targets, obviously.

We welcome the independent analysis which cited, among other factors, a number of great strengths that this economy has, Mr. Speaker, and a number of challenges we have, including the global economy and including, in their words, the fact that we are in a minority Parliament. That's why we hope that we can work together on issues in the future to continue to meet those targets.

We adopted a number of initiatives in the budget which I think are certainly consistent with Conservative points of view. I look forward to hearing from other agencies. These are not easy things, but I think Ontarians are prepared to embrace the challenge in front of us. We've laid out a plan to get us back to balance, Mr. Speaker. The expense challenges are real, but we will—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I think the Deputy Premier may get his wish in hearing from other agencies. The Standard and Poor's negative outlook on Ontario is an indictment of this government's performance and of its fiscal plan.

On April 4 this year, this finance minister himself said, "We're worried about costs when we have a proposal to raise taxes and expenditures." Duncan told reporters.

"That's one thing that in my view, given what the demands of the credit agencies are, we have to be very cautious about. That's not what credit agencies are looking for."

Really? Our party and our leader have repeatedly called on your government to correct your course. You refused because you just didn't get it, Deputy Premier.

Do you get it now? Or are you going to wait until we get downgraded and interest rates make your budget completely obsolete?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, Standard and Poor's affirmed the rating for the next two years, and they are looking to this Legislature to meet those challenges. They cited a number of great strengths in the Ontario economy, which we concur with, and they quite correctly cited the

challenges that we are faced with. So we welcome their unbiased, balanced perspective on what is happening. We will likely hear from other agencies in the near future. We will welcome their advice as well.

1040

I'm pleased to report that Ontario's debt continues to be among the most in-demand debt in the world because it's seen as strong debt. There are real challenges on the expenditure side, and this government is committed to dealing with those challenges. We're doing that, and we will meet the challenges.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will come to order.

Question?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Let's review, Deputy Premier, what Standard and Poor's actually had to say yesterday, and I'm quoting again: "We believe the province's main credit challenges include its continuing weak budgetary ... metrics and its challenging cost-containment plan required to achieve budgetary balance by fiscal 2018."

Deputy Premier, this is the second credit rating agency in four months to put you on negative credit watch. If we want to get our economy moving again to create jobs, you must get our fiscal House in order.

You responded to the last negative credit outlook by stubbornly doubling down on the same failed path. How do you intend to respond this time?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, by implementing the budget and the fiscal plan we have laid out, by attempting to work in this Legislature in a minority parliament to address the very real challenges that face this economy that have built up over many years. One simply has to look at the history of debt accumulation in Ontario to see where and when it happened. These numbers are all well understood.

I will remind you that the Globe and Mail reminds us this morning—they called the Leader of the Opposition the forgotten man of Queen's Park because of the very wrong response to the need for this Legislature to work together in challenging times.

The plan we've laid out is the right plan, Mr. Speaker. Standard and Poor's quite properly says we have to meet the spending targets. We will do that with or without the help of the opposition.

## ONTARIO'S CREDIT RATING

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Back to the Deputy Premier: This is not the first time that Standard and Poor's has issued a very direct warning to your government. In the summer of 2009, Standard and Poor's put us on negative watch. In the fall of 2009, they downgraded Ontario. Now, in the spring of 2012, they put Ontario on negative watch again.

In their move yesterday, they issued a stern warning to the Premier: "The negative outlook reflects our view that there is at least a one-in-three likelihood that we could lower the long-term rating one notch...." We warned you

last week that a 1% increase in interest rates means \$500 million wiped away to service a \$280-billion debt.

Will the Deputy Premier finally listen? What are you prepared to do to make sure we avoid a further downgrade to Ontario's credit rating?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, again, I want to remind the people of Ontario that Standard and Poor's affirmed our credit rating. They did not affirm the credit rating of the United States. They did not affirm the credit rating of France. There's a variety of other jurisdictions they did not affirm the credit rating. We take their advice very seriously.

The member is right. At the depth of the most recent recession, they did put us on negative outlook, as they did with virtually every jurisdiction in North America that doesn't have oil, doesn't have natural gas and doesn't have potash.

The challenges to our economy are real. I think the people of Ontario expect the members of this Legislature to work together in a minority situation, not to play games, not to ring bells, not to not show up, and do the people's business. We look forward to working with both parties in this Legislature as we move—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Yesterday, and I see again today, this finance minister was quick to do what he always does. He points the blame anywhere else. But there is no one left to blame, Speaker. Standard and Poor's was clear. This is your responsibility, sir: "Ontario's large budgetary deficits since the recession have significantly boosted the debt burden."

It's black and white, Deputy Premier. Your uncontrollable spending, your debt, is what got us into this mess. Will your government continue to invent excuses, or are you finally ready to accept responsibility?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I accept responsibility that we stepped in and helped save General Motors and Chrysler. I accept responsibility that we accelerated capital projects across the province to build more hospitals that needed to be built, to build new roads that needed to be built, to build municipal infrastructure, to put people to work at a time when jobs were scarce.

It is now time to get that deficit back. We have brought it down. We have exceeded our targets, as Standard and Poor's pointed out, in each of the first three years. I welcome their advice. We embrace it. We're prepared to continue to make the right choices for the best future for Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Well, you do have to get the deficit under control. We've been telling you that. Now they're telling you that. When are you going to listen? Without a doubt, yesterday's decision is an indictment of your government's fiscal policy. The verdict is in, Deputy Premier. Tax hikes and irresponsible spending will not get Ontario moving out of this economic downturn. Now more than ever, you need to change your

ways. You need to show that you're willing to do the right thing.

Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus are committed to taking this province on a different path, a path that leads to jobs, a path that leads to a strong economy, to stability. The question is, are you? If so, then the time is now. If you refuse to listen to us, will you please, please listen to Moody's, listen to Standard and Poor's, and change your course?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Finance.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We've taken the deficit from just over \$19 billion to \$15 billion. That's going to continue to go down, according to the path we've laid out. We laid out in 2010 the path back to balance. We've overachieved in each year so far.

There is no doubt that there are expenditure challenges. I think, working together, this Legislature can address these challenges. I think the official opposition ought to follow the advice of this morning's Globe and Mail and say, "Don't be irrelevant." Please come to the table and work with this government. We do need to get back to balance. I think Ontarians expect that of us. I think a number of Conservatives expect that of us.

I'm reminded that some Tories remain puzzled that the Leader of the Opposition came out against the budget as soon as it was introduced. "Tim's position has left him out of being any relevant part" of the news. I just wonder which Tory it was. Was it you? Was it her? Was it him? I don't know, Mr. Speaker. We're prepared to get this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## JOB CREATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Over the past month, New Democrats have brought the issues of real, everyday people to this Legislature, and I'm happy to say that over the course of this last month, we've been able to get real results for them. By doing our best to make this Legislature work, we've put a little fairness into this budget and avoided an election.

But there's a lot more work that needs to be done. This morning we learned about more job losses in Mississauga. When will we see a real jobs plan from this government?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll refer the member opposite to the budget. We have created a jobs and prosperity task force. The Minister of Economic Development will be announcing the membership of that.

I would remind the member that since the bottom of the recession, we've had more than 340,000 net new jobs in Ontario. I'll remind the member opposite that in the month of March this year we had 46,000 net new jobs in



Ontario, full-time jobs that will contribute to the future growth of this province.

There's more work to do; we remain committed to that. We remain committed to working with all parties in this Legislature, not just to get Ontario's deficit under control, which we believe is one of the most important things we can do to create jobs, but indeed to take the funds that we have available and make better use of them to create more jobs still.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The people of Ontario are looking for action, not more task force studies. This government is finally and grudgingly conceding that corporate tax giveaways and the HST are not creating the 600,000 jobs that they were supposed to.

We've put forward a simple idea: that companies that aren't creating jobs shouldn't be getting tax breaks. The government says it's ready to consider constructive ideas like this. What we want to know is, when is this going to happen?

**1050**

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The third party is trying to have it both ways. On the one hand, they say, "Don't give corporate tax cuts." On the other hand, they stand up and say, "Create a new corporate tax cut." That's what he's proposing, and it's a worthy idea; I don't deny that. I think it is worthy of looking at, but you can't have it both ways. Leave the rhetoric at home. Come to the Legislature and let's work together.

Mr. Drummond pointed out that a number of our existing tax credits don't work well. Most economists say that. But don't stand up and say, "No more corporate tax cuts," and then look the other way and say, "Create a new corporate tax cut." Let's have some consistency. Let's hear some real ideas. Let's leave the rhetoric at the door, and let's work together for a better future for Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I hardly think this is rhetoric. What we are saying is to reward those that do the right thing.

This week, we saw the United Kingdom head back into recession, thanks to an unbalanced and reckless plan for them to balance their books. We need to do better here in Ontario. On this side of the House, we plan to work hard, not just to make this minority work but to make it work for ordinary, everyday people who sent us here.

The question: Is the government ready to get to work on a jobs plan that actually creates work for the people who need it, people like those in Mississauga who lost their jobs yesterday?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I just remind the member opposite of last month: 46,000 net new jobs. The unemployment rate fell to 7.4%, the lowest in three years. There's still more to do. We've got to get that lower.

Employment has increased by 348,000 net new jobs from the low in May 2009, recovering all of the jobs lost. The member referred to the UK. He's right. We've

recovered more than 100% of the lost jobs; the United Kingdom, only 38% of the lost jobs. Last year, 121,000 net new jobs in Ontario and 45.7% of all the new jobs created in Canada, which is larger than our share of the gross domestic product.

We have a plan. We're implementing it. We look forward to working with the third party to build on that and still build a better province for all of our families.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Ma question sera pour le premier ministre par intérim. The Premier has talked a lot in the past few days about making a minority government work. I think by working together, we made some good progress on making the budget a bit more fair for everyday Ontarians, but that's only one part of making a minority government work. Making it work means listening to the will of the Legislature. When will the Premier and Deputy Premier listen to the will of the Legislature and strike a select committee on Ornge?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think the member is well aware, considering she sits on the public accounts committee, that right now we have hearings into the Ornge matter that are taking place here in the Ontario Legislature. It's the public accounts committee, a standing committee of the Legislature, which is undergoing a thorough review of the Ornge situation. They also have a robust list of witnesses that are coming forward and a list of witnesses moving forward. It's an opportunity for them, with the guidance of the Auditor General and guidance I know, too, of counsel because of the current OPP situation, to do a thorough examination of Ornge and move forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Back to the Deputy Premier: The story goes that, after the fall election, the Premier called Bill Davis to get advice as to how you make a minority government work. We hadn't had one in Ontario for a long time. If the story is true, Bill Davis told the Premier to work with other parties in the Legislature, to be ready to compromise.

Premier, we have heard a lot of flowery language about working together, but I think it's time to get down to brass tacks. Will the Premier agree to respect the will of the majority in this House and strike a select committee for Ornge?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I take a very different perspective when it comes to co-operation in this House. I'm very proud of the good work that was done by the government and the New Democratic Party to reach a compromise on the recent budget that has come forward.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the honourable member who has raised this question has served for a number of years here in the Legislature, and I know that she would never want to leave the wrong impression, with this Legislature or with individuals watching on TV, that somehow there

is a difference in the powers of a standing committee or a select committee. We have nine standing committees of the Legislature, including public accounts, which are given all the tools they need to look into matters like Ornge. Public accounts is currently seized with the matter. They have a robust list of witnesses, and they are continuing to undertake the type of investigation that she's asking for.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Back to the deputy: Earlier this week, the Premier talked about a perfect marriage. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? New Democrats want to stay single. I don't know too many women who are looking for a spouse who doesn't listen. Not too many women are looking for a spouse who ignores the rules whenever he or she feels like it. Working together means compromising on the things you want to work together on, but it also means compromising on the things you don't want to work together on, and the Premier is not doing that.

Will the Premier respect the will of the majority of the House and strike a select committee to look into Ornge?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, once again, I'm proud of the very good work that we did with the New Democratic Party and what we accomplished in terms of the budget. Our government is open to working with both opposition parties, but when I look across the aisle at the Progressive Conservative Party—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, when I look across at the official opposition—not the NDP but the official opposition—I see a party that has gone to great lengths to obstruct the business of this Legislature through their bell ringing.

We right now have the Accepting Schools Act, Bill 13, which is being obstructed by the official opposition. We have the rent increase guideline, Bill 19, which is being obstructed by the Conservative Party. We have the healthy homes renovation tax credit, which is right now being held up in committee because of the Conservative Party. Mr. Speaker, that is not—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, my question is to the government House leader. What I want to do is, I want to point out—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Your own member wants to ask the question.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** —I want to point out to the people who are observing the proceedings here that there's only

one party here, one caucus, that is obstructing the will of the Legislature, and that is the government caucus.

What we're seeing is that every committee hearing that we have, witnesses are coming forward. We have eight minutes per witness to question these people on a very serious issue. Even witnesses say that the eight minutes that they have is not enough. We have called for a select committee for that very reason. Why is this government obstructing the will of this Legislature that will allow us to get to the bottom of this issue?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, again, I know the honourable member who stands up is a parliamentarian of some experience. He would never want to leave the impression with this House or with the viewers watching that there is a difference between the powers of a select committee or a standing committee. He talks about the amount of time that a witness has in front of a standing committee of the Legislature. That is a decision of the committee itself, Mr. Speaker. It has nothing to do with the nature of it.

Mr. Speaker, the public accounts committee is seized with this matter. They have all the tools that any committee of this Legislature would have, select, standing or otherwise. They are undertaking a very thorough review of the Ornge situation, including the testimony of the Minister of Health and the good work that she is doing. But the real question, the final piece of the puzzle, is Bill 50, and I ask the member, in his supplementary, to commit right now to passing that piece of legislation.

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**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Mr. Speaker, I heard the government House leader very clearly. I now want to ask the government House leader to agree to this: If he does not want to give us a select committee, will he agree that we adopt within the public accounts committee the terms of reference that we proposed for a select committee, so that we could get on with the business of properly getting witnesses forward with the appropriate whistle-blower protection? We're going to ask for a very simple commitment today. Will the government House leader agree to give us those terms of reference? If he will do that, we will co-operate and we'll move forward and we'll get to the bottom of this issue.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I've already mentioned the names of some people here. I will continue to do that, and if I have to do it a second time, I'll get close to the naming situation that I told you before: warning, then naming.

Answer?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I think the public accounts committee is doing outstanding work. In fact,



do you know what we learned yesterday? We learned that two of Canada's best-connected Conservatives—Guy Giorno, the former chief of staff to Mike Harris, and Lynne Golding, a prominent PC Party activist—were the ones responsible for providing advice to Chris Mazza, advice to not put his salary on the sunshine list, which he didn't; that they didn't have to co-operate with the Auditor General, which he didn't; and how to create the web of for-profit entities which are right now being examined by that committee.

I have confidence in the public accounts committee. I have confidence in the members and their questioning of the witnesses, and I believe they are doing a great job in terms of getting to the bottom of Ornge and bringing to light some of these issues which my friend across the way doesn't seem to want to talk about very much.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Minister, there's a disturbing pattern at Ornge of well-connected insiders lining their pockets with limited health care dollars. First we learned of former Liberal Party president Alfred Apps, whose firm billed Ornge and the public over \$9 million. Now we hear of the Premier's former chief of staff and head strategist, Don Guy, whose "professional services" earned him a cool \$107,000. Why is this government, time and time again, putting well-connected insiders ahead of front-line care to people in Ontario?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** As I've said, the public accounts committee is doing an excellent job in terms of meeting with witnesses, questioning witnesses and getting to the bottom of Ornge. But if the honourable members of the opposition, as I say, want to hold hearings during the course of question period, then again I talk about what we found out yesterday about two prominent Conservatives: Guy Giorno, a former chief of staff to Mike Harris; Lynne Golding, a very prominent PC Party lawyer. We found out that they billed Ornge some \$11 million to give them the type of advice which is in fact under question right now. They told Dr. Chris Mazza that it was fine to refuse to put his \$1.4-million salary on the sunshine list, and he hid that salary. They told him that they didn't have to co-operate with the Auditor General, and they did not. They told him how to create a web of for-profit entities, which they did, and it's the subject of investigation right now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Speaker, Don Guy's relationship to the Premier has been described in newspaper articles as "joined at the hip." Some say that despite leaving the Premier's office years ago, he still has a say on how things are run there. Mr. Guy's last bill, for \$16,950, was to one of Ornge's for-profit companies, Ornge Global Holdings Ltd., on December 17, 2011, right when the news about Ornge's high-flying execu-

tives hit the news. He didn't take the cash. Was that because the Liberal Party's campaign chair knew that what the government was doing was completely wrong and ill-advised?

**Hon. John Milloy:** As I said, these are all matters that the committee is seized with in terms of Ornge, in terms of the various billings that went on, and there are going to be opportunities to question witnesses. But if the member insists upon holding these types of hearings during question period, then again, let's talk about Guy Giorno and Lynne Golding and the fact that these lawyers with intimate links to the PC Party—I don't think you can get any more intimate than being Mike Harris's chief of staff—billed 22,000 hours of work to Ornge. That's 916 days, working around the clock, or 2.5 years every day around the clock.

We're learning about disturbing things that went on there with these PC-connected lawyers. We're looking forward to the testimony of Mr. Kelly Mitchell, another well-connected Conservative, who was paid \$400,000 to schmooze and lobby opposition members across the way.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, this past November you introduced the Accepting Schools Act, legislation that would help make our schools safer and create a more welcoming environment for all students.

As a former educator and a parent, I'm disappointed that five months later, the bill is still stuck in second reading. When it comes to the welfare of our kids in the province, we need to put politics aside and do what's right.

Now, the MPP for Kitchener—Waterloo introduced a similar bill on anti-bullying, which government members supported because we believe in doing everything we can to help protect students. Unfortunately, Conservative members are continuing to obstruct what is good public policy.

Minister, what are you doing to make sure this important legislation is passed?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** The member from Sault Ste. Marie is right: Taking steps in our schools to eradicate bullying is critically important to families and children in this province. There have been many times where this Legislature has come together to help kids. Unfortunately, this is not one of those times.

Liberal members, as the member from Sault Ste. Marie has said, did not play games with the member for Kitchener—Waterloo's bill. I have publicly and repeatedly said I want to incorporate over half of that bill. The goal is to make Bill 13 the strongest possible bill that we can have. Let's take good ideas from all sides of the House. Let's get this bill to committee. I call on the opposition: Stop delaying. Stop playing politics. Put kids first.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I am going to comment on my concern that we stick with government

policy in the questioning. I would ask the member to make sure that you don't try to slip a sentence in there that doesn't.

*Supplementary.*

**Mr. David Oraziatti:** Thank you, Speaker. Minister, I appreciate your commitment to moving this legislation forward. I think it's important that we focus on good education policy and what Bill 13 does to protect students across the province. Members of the Legislature all agree that bullying in our schools is wrong and we need to do more to prevent it, yet the opposition have chosen to disrupt debate on this issue 10 times. They've decided to put procedural games ahead of good public policy.

Bill 13 needs to move forward. Minister, can you tell us how we're going to continue to move this legislation forward?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Let me be very clear: We want to make Bill 13, our government bill, the best possible bill to protect students. That's why I've provided the member for Kitchener–Waterloo with amendments to our Accepting Schools Act, Bill 13, drafted in legislative language, which include more than one half of the provisions in Bill 14. We did this because we can only fight bullying in Ontario schools if this House stands together.

But the opposition stands in the way. Tim Hudak, the leader of the PC Party, hasn't shown leadership. He needs to put aside partisan politics. He needs to put aside—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I remind the member to refer to people in this place either by their riding or their ministry.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Thank you, Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition needs to support the movement of Bill 13 to committee. We need to put aside partisan politics and ideology. We need to work across party lines for our kids—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the government House leader: The government House leader knows full well that we only have five more days left between now and the recess. That's five more days of hearings with witnesses who are given only eight minutes of questioning per caucus. What we want to do now—I'm going to take at his word the government House leader, who said that he trusts the committee to do the work. I will do this: I will present to the subcommittee the proposal that we adopt the terms of reference that had been adopted and proposed for the select committee. I want to know from the government House leader, will you support a motion

from the subcommittee that we adopt the terms of reference for the select committee?

1110

**Hon. John Milloy:** As I said, the public accounts committee is doing an excellent job. It's a standing committee of the Legislature and it's appropriate that it's looking into the Ornge situation, as there was a report from the Auditor General that came forward. But if the member wants to talk about the procedures here, I have a question for him. Bill 50 is before this House. Bill 50 is the most important piece, the final piece of the puzzle, in terms of addressing the Ornge issue, which the Minister of Health has taken leadership on in putting forward a number of measures. My question to him and to his opposition colleagues is, are they going to continue to obstruct this Legislature and obstruct this important bill which would allow the Ornge situation to evolve and address the concerns that were raised by the Auditor General?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, it's very clear that the House leader knows nothing about this issue. I spoke in our lead-off debate yesterday on Bill 50. He should read the transcript. He'll find out that that legislation is nothing more than smoke and mirrors.

What we need to do is get to the bottom of the scandal itself. What has been proven is that the minister's two major objections as to why the government did not act were taken out from under her by testimony at the committee yesterday. The fact that it's federally incorporated, the fact of the performance agreement—neither of those issues is real.

I want to ask this: Rather than continue to obstruct, all we're asking is that you agree to allow that public accounts committee to adopt the broad terms of reference. When that motion comes forward, will you—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, as I've pointed out, the public accounts committee is a committee of this Legislature which has the full powers to investigate these matters and come up with the rules and administration of how it goes forward.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? I am not going to stand here and listen to that member undermine the very, very important work of the Auditor General. I will take the word of the Auditor General over a lawyer who advised Chris Mazza on how to hide his salary any day of the week. You know what the Auditor General said? I quote: "The performance agreement was weak and it was not adequate. It needed to be significantly strengthened. The additional corporate entities that Ornge unilaterally created were not covered by the performance agreement. The performance agreement does not allow the ministry"—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, the list goes on. The Auditor General pointed out the flaws in the Ornge



agreement. I will take his word any day rather than a group of Conservative lawyers who billed for thousands and thousands of hours and advised them on how to go around many of the issues that are before the House right now.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Acting Premier. The Minister of Health has blamed the performance agreement for her government's inaction with Ornge. But yesterday in committee it was very clear: Ms. Lynne Golding, one of Ornge's legal advisors, said that the performance agreement that was in place while the executives at Ornge were lining their pockets gave the Ministry of Health the power it needed to keep Ornge in line. Why did the minister mislead Ontarians by stating—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm standing.

The member will withdraw.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Withdrawn.

Why did the minister indicate that the previous performance agreement made her powerless to control Ornge?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The very direct answer is, because the Auditor General confirmed what the minister said. As I just indicated to the Conservatives, I will take the word of the Auditor General, a respected officer of this House—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Oxford, come to order. Member from Simcoe South, come to order. The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, come to order—second time.

**Hon. John Milloy:**—over the word of two prominent Conservatives who admitted yesterday that they advised Chris Mazza on how to hide his \$1.4 million salary, something that he did; they advised Chris Mazza that he did not have to co-operate with the Auditor General, and he didn't; they advised how to create the web of for-profit entities which are right now the subject of committee and OPP investigations—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. My frustration is the arguments that are taking place around the aisle, with no relationship whatsoever to what is being questioned or answered. First of all, knock that off. Second, when I ask you for your attention and you give it to me and then you proceed to start up again, it's only going to get under my skin, and you're not going to like that.

*Supplementary?*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Speaker, again to the Acting Premier: Just yesterday in this House, the Minister of Health said, "The original performance agreement with Ornge did not give us the tools we needed to address these concerns." But it became very clear in the committee that Ornge's legal adviser says that's not true, and that the province had great moral suasion over Ornge—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Attorney General, come to order.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:**—not to mention pages of legal covenants, but didn't choose to use it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Guelph, take your seat.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Was blaming the performance agreement just an easy way for this government and this Minister of Health to hide her failure to do her job?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'm quite frankly a little disappointed that the NDP is falling into the trap of defending PC lawyers. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General, a very respected officer of this Legislature, outlined in his report the problems with the performance agreement. Here's what he said: "The additional corporate entities that Ornge unilaterally created were not covered by the performance agreement...." The performance agreement "does not allow the ministry to recover any unspent air ambulance funding...." The performance agreement "does not entitle the Ministry to access the books and records of any of the entities that Ornge ... controls...." The performance agreement "has only two specific and measurable response-time requirements relating to requests for air ambulance services." The Minister of Health and the government is taking action to clean up the mess that was created with the advice of these well-connected PC lawyers, and we ask the NDP to join us.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The western Mississauga neighbourhoods are known for single-family houses. Thousands of households in Meadowvale and Streetsville rent their accommodation. Many people struggle to pay their monthly rent. Ontarians need affordable rents, and tenants do not need to suffer from unjustified rent increases. Legislation stands before this House that, if passed, will help provide a more balanced and transparent approach to rent increases for both tenants and landlords. Will the minister describe this legislation and how it will assist tenants in Ontario in finding stable housing costs?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank my colleague for the question. We've consistently demonstrated our commitment to protecting tenants across Ontario. In fact, as further evidence of that commitment, I tabled Bill 19, legislation which, if passed, will further strengthen the Residential Tenancies Act. What it will do is ensure that the annual rent increase guideline falls between 1% and 2.5%, and that will allow some stability and predictability for Ontarians who are renters—those hundreds of thousands of people across the province who are watching this Legislature and are interested in this legislation because they know it will provide some stability.

My concern is that the party opposite apparently doesn't agree with this, apparently doesn't think this is a

concern and, in fact, is disrupting and delaying the debate so it's impossible for us to move forward with this legislation. I think the people of Ontario need to understand that we owe it to the landlords and tenants of this province to have an intelligent debate on this legislation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Minister, western Mississauga tenants need the security proposed in Bill 19. We have our struggles with the recent recession, just like so many other Ontarians, and people need to know what annual rent increases they're planning for. Western Mississauga tenants were happy to learn of this legislation last fall. My neighbours in Meadowvale and Streetsville expect its swift implementation.

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I've sat in this legislative chamber with my MPP colleagues anticipating the debate on this and other important legislation, only to see these important measures bogged down by such procedural delays as the needless ringing of division bells.

Minister, my constituents want results on rent increases and not tired, right-wing excuses. What are the long-term consequences of the delay in this Legislature in the debate and the passage of Bill 19?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I really want to thank the member for his concern, and I am honestly concerned about this, because many of us on this side of the House ran in 2003 because of our concerns for tenants. We changed the Residential Tenancies Act, we've introduced changes, and we continue to modify the legislation to fix some of the damage that was done under the previous government.

We need to ensure that the amendments are in place to affect the 2013 rent increase guideline, but those changes need to be approved by the Legislature prior to September 1. That means that Bill 19 has to make its way through the legislative process this session.

I am asking the party opposite, in the name of all of the tenants in this province—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Some of you have already been mentioned by riding.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm asking the party opposite to rise above itself and to listen to the tenants across the province, of whom you have many in your ridings, and to move this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. The Ornge scandal is a tale of greed, corruption and incompetence. While the true story continues to unfold, yesterday the plot thickened. Not only did

witnesses refute and flatly reject each and every one of Minister Matthews' excuses, we learned that the Ornge scandal has also entangled senior cabinet ministers.

Minister Duncan and Sandra Pupatello attended a private dinner with Rainer Beltzner and executives from AgustaWestland. Ontarians deserve to know what the nature of this dinner was. Specifically, did they discuss the \$300-million bond offering, the \$6.7-million kick-back, or maybe the scheme to defraud taxpayers? Perhaps they discussed Agusta's long history of bribery and crooked dealings.

So I ask the minister, will he share with this House the exact nature and topic of conversation at this private dinner?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The testimony given yesterday was accurate, Mr. Speaker. We were invited to meet with them. In fact, they had organized a meeting with a helicopter supplier who was interested in getting a federal government contract to supply the defence industry. They wanted to advise Ontario about that because there was a potential at the time for jobs to be created in Ontario.

I did attend that meeting. There were a number of people at that meeting and there was no follow-up done on it. At the time it was a very short dinner about purchasing helicopters—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Again to the finance minister: The Ornge scandal is knocking at the Premier's door. The list of Liberal insiders directly connected to the Ornge scandal is growing: Liberal Party president Alf Apps; the Premier's right-hand man, Jamison Steeve; Liberal campaign manager, Don Guy; senior Liberal staffer Jennifer Tracey; Warren Kinsella's girlfriend, Lisa Kirbie; Minister Matthews' former chief of staff, Mary Lowe; and the actual architect of the whole eHealth boondoggle, George Smitherman, again; Minister Matthews herself; Sandra Pupatello; and now Minister Duncan.

Speaker, will the finance minister come clean and admit that he and his government knew full well what was happening at Ornge but chose to look away?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** You know, Mr. Speaker, I wish that we would let the committee do its work and not engage in these drive-by smears. The fact of the matter is, what we learned yesterday is that that Guy Giorno and Lynne Golding, two of the most prominent Conservatives—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Prince Edward-Hastings has now been warned.

**Hon. John Milloy:** —join the ranks of—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Peterborough has now been warned.



**Hon. John Milloy:**—join the ranks of Kelly Mitchell, a very prominent PC loyalist and lobbyist who was paid \$400,000 to schmooze members. Mr. Speaker, what we heard yesterday is that two of the most prominent members of the Progressive Conservative Party, people with long ties to that party across the way, were the ones who advised Chris Mazza how to hide his salary—and he did. They advised him how to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Families whose livelihoods are connected to the horse racing industry are still feeling burned by this government's decision, made without any consultation, to end the horse racing revenue-sharing program. New Democrats earlier this week forced the government to come to the table with the horse racing industry and to commit to support. Given the dire predicaments that these families and people find themselves in, they're looking for more details. Will the Minister of Finance tell those in the horse racing community when he plans to meet with them and what shape this support will take?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, let me set the record straight. In fact, the industry was consulted extensively as part of the land-based gaming review. Second of all, at the end of the day, the NDP did not make anything in the agreement conditional upon that. Third, I said, the day of the announcement, that we would discuss opportunities for mitigation with the industry at an appropriate time.

There will continue to be a horse racing industry in Ontario. I'm advised that five, possibly six, tracks will survive and that, indeed, the industry will still be there. We have a year; we're continuing the program for another year. I believe probably the Ministry of Agriculture will work with them in some fashion to deal with this.

But I wish you would have forced harder to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I would actually say to the Deputy Premier that that's not our understanding about the agreement.

For families in Fort Erie, Essex, Sudbury, Kingston and countless other communities, the Liberal decision to end the revenue-sharing program has put people's jobs and livelihoods at risk. When is the minister planning to sit down with the horse racing industry and get to work on a plan that retains jobs in hard-hit communities?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** At the beginning of question period, the NDP said, "Don't subsidize business." Now they're saying, "Subsidize the horse racing industry." You know, I would refer the member opposite to a very good piece of work that appeared in the Windsor Star last week that pointed out how much of that subsidy not only is not coming to Ontario, it's leaving the country.

They're trying to have it both ways. At the beginning, they get up and the critic for finance talked about, "Don't subsidize business." Now they stand up at the end of the day and they say, "Subsidize the horse racing industry." You can't have it both ways. We've made our choices. We're investing in health and education so that we have better schools and health care.

### FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, on December 8, you introduced legislation, Bill 30, the Family Caregiver Leave Act, that would provide up to eight weeks of unpaid job leave for employees to provide care and support for their sick and injured family members. This is important legislation. It protects the jobs of working Ontarians who need to care for their loved ones. Minister, it's now April 26. The bill is only at second reading. This is legislation that helps Ontario families. My constituents are asking and asking about the delay. Minister, why hasn't the bill gone to committee? What is going on here? My constituents want this done. They want the bill passed. They want to be able to look after their loved ones in their time of need.

1130

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Speaker, I want to thank this member. This is a very important question. Whether it's a child who has to spend time in the hospital or an elderly parent who is suffering a broken hip, caregivers should be able to focus on what matters most when your family is in crisis: providing care to support their loved ones without fear of losing their jobs.

I'm very disappointed that this bill is only at second reading, and I'm even more disappointed by the delaying tactics the PC Party has been using. This legislation is something that caregivers across Ontario have been asking us for. We're at 11 hours of debate, and the official opposition has rung the bells six times. Ontario families who need this support unfortunately will continue to have to wait.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Minister, I know these delays are holding up other important legislation. I see it around here every day. There's huge support for Bill 30 outside of this place—organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society and the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. They want the time to care for their loved ones who are sick and dying. They don't want to be victims of petty Conservative politics, the games, the obstruction and the bell ringing.

Minister, what can we do to see that the Family Caregiver Leave Act actually gets to committee, in spite of this Tory obstructionism?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Family caregiver leave is a matter of compassion, and we believe it's the right thing to do for Ontario families. This piece of legislation is too important to play games with. Bill 30 is a critical part of our government's commitment to ensure families across

Ontario have the support they need when they need it the most. It's distressing to me that the PC Party fails to participate or offer constructive ideas.

You know, it's an important piece of legislation that we introduced. We think it has the gravity that requires that kind of participation. It seems that they're taking every opportunity to disrupt or obstruct or delay the work of the legislature. This issue isn't about partisan politics; it's about an opportunity for all parties to come together and make the right decision for Ontarians. I will continue to reach out to the PC Party and ask them to help get this bill passed.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. New question.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Speaker, to the Deputy Premier: Last week, the day after I asked in this House about former chief of staff Don Guy's involvement in the Ornge scandal, someone had his lawyer send me an intimidating letter referencing a lawsuit. It seems someone over there is finally listening, so I'll try again.

Yesterday, in the public accounts committee, Lynne Golding, of Fasken Martineau, tabled a series of invoices totalling close to \$125,000 paid out to Don Guy's Artisan Research and Communications firm for professional services with respect to Ornge, dating back to 2007.

Deputy Premier, I'll ask again: Can you confirm for this House with certainty that Don Guy was abiding by all the requirements of the lobbyist act?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, there are committee hearings that are taking place, and I think these kinds of drive-by smears on the part of the opposition are unnecessary.

What we found out yesterday, though, if the honourable member wants to talk about billing and if he wants, as I say, to hold hearings here during question period, is that lawyers Guy Giorno and Lynne Golding, who were brought forward by Ornge, two of the most prominent Conservative lawyers in the country, billed Ornge for 22,000 hours of work. That's 916 days if you were working around the clock, or 2.5 years, if you were working every day.

What's interesting is what advice these two prominent Conservatives gave.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lanark, come to order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Well, they advised Dr. Chris Mazza on how to hide his salary, and he did. They advised him on how not to co-operate with the Auditor General—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I'll go back, earlier this week, to the lobbyist registrar's opinion on federal Liberal leader Alf Apps's lobbying efforts on behalf of Ornge, despite his denials in committee. Now we learn that just months after leaving as the Premier's most senior adviser and election guru, Don Guy is courted by the federal Liberal president to lobby on behalf of Ornge to the tune of \$125,000. It seems your Premier's former chief of staff was providing advice on Ornge, he was being paid to run the Liberal campaign, he was advising other companies on how to lobby the McGuinty government—this Guy really gets around.

Deputy Premier, will you commit today to produce and table any and all correspondence and emails that were sent or received relating to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** This is getting a little bit beyond the pale. We have a committee of the Legislature, the public accounts committee, which in fact is chaired by a Conservative member, which is right now seized with the issue of Ornge. We have a robust list of witnesses who are coming forward, and the member has an opportunity, he and other colleagues in his party, to ask questions.

But the more important question is, when the Minister of Health went forward and outlined the plans that she is taking in order to correct the problems at Ornge, the key missing piece of the puzzle was legislation. I want to know, why did that member stand here in the House yesterday and admit that he was going to block, through childish bell-ringing, the passage of a very important bill which would address the issues related to Ornge?

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: Can you tell me why it's okay to subsidize transportation in southern Ontario and not with the ONTC?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The reality is, over the years, we have been subsidizing the ONTC. Now, to use the example you used in the House earlier on when you compared it to GO Transit, GO Transit has 57 million riders and a subsidy of approximately \$2 per ride. The ONTC has a ridership of 320,000, on average, a year, with a subsidy of \$403—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** A year. That's a \$2 subsidy compared to a \$403 subsidy. The reality is, we cannot afford a subsidy of \$100 million any longer per year. So what we are going to do is, we're going to divest the ONTC, we're going to ensure that we have in place—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Minister, people in northern Ontario are disappointed with you. You know as well as everybody else that it costs more money to deliver services in northern Ontario. Why? Because it's a large



geography with a small population base. Running an ambulance in northern Ontario costs as much as 10 times as much as running the ambulance in Toronto, but do we stop running ambulances? Hospitals in northern Ontario cost more money to run. Do we shut down our hospitals? Highways in northern Ontario cost more money. Why? Because there's more miles. Do we stop spending money? No, because it's part of the infrastructure.

So I say again, why is it that we can subsidize something in Toronto but we can't subsidize it in northern Ontario?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Minister?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** You know, the bluster doesn't impress anybody. The bluster from the member, I guess, is clouding his memory, because let's see what happened when they were in power. They reduced bus service, losing jobs from Timmins to Chapleau to Wawa; docked a new ferry in Tobermory, scratching jobs; cut northern Ontario services from 21 to six communities; and sold off Star Transfer immediately. It wasn't a divestment with them; it was a foreclosure.

Ours is a far more reasonable approach. We will divest, and we will have in place a much stronger transportation system, a much more effective transportation system, a much more realistic transportation system, and we will do it without having to have a subsidy of \$403 per rider.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We were to have in the Speaker's gallery today two parties: from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, Sheldon Goodman, Howard English, Stephen Adler and Jordan Kerbel; and from B'nai Brith Canada, Dr. Leon Genesove, Ruth Klein and Anita Bromberg. They're here for the Israeli flag-raising on the front lawn today at noon. So there's a flag-raising ceremony at noon today outside of the Legislature.

Point of order, the member for—

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Speaker, I have a question.  
*Interjection.*

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** We're done, out of time?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh, no.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** It gives me great pleasure today to introduce Anton Peiris, who's the operational coordinator of the Rouge Valley Naturalists. Welcome to the House.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to welcome again the people from the Canadian Cancer Society. Certainly anyone here from Durham or Durham region, I'm happy

to acknowledge. But I also met Paul Howe—he's from Penetanguishene—who's here again this afternoon. I hope he's enjoying the entertainment here today at Queen's Park.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Speaker, I know that you'll appreciate that I've had the chance to attend the Grand River Conservation Authority reception, and you did a great job helping to organize it. I think that we should express our appreciation to the members of the Grand River Conservation Authority who are here today and welcome them to the Ontario Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I wholeheartedly agree.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to welcome to this House, and they're arriving as I speak, a huge delegation—actually lots of them are there already—from the Canadian Cancer Society. I will start with Joanne Di Nardo, senior manager at the Cancer Society; Florentina Stancu-Soare, also with the Canadian Cancer Society; Elizabeth Rovichaud, Lindsey Collins, Michael Sheiner, all from the Canadian Cancer Society; as well as their CEO, Mr. Martin Kabat.

I want to welcome Kate Neale, a very brave young woman. I want to thank Lera Ryan; Elizabeth Holmes; Linda Constant; Janice Cunningham; Mary Hobbs; Diane Barclay-Neale, the mother of the very brave young woman; Lori Synes-Taraba; Janice Hodgson; Cathy Burns from my riding of Nickel Belt, from Sudbury; Mary Ransom; Sharon Chandler; Julie Datta; John Atkinson, and many more who have made the trip down to Queen's Park with the Canadian Cancer Society and in support of the bill I'll be introducing in a few minutes.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Yesterday marked the 38th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, a non-violent uprising of the country against a fascist dictatorship. This last weekend, Carlos Morgadinho came to our office and helped us recognize that event. He's here today with guests Mr. Aniceto Afonso, Mrs. Marilia Afonso, Mr. Francisco Sousa Mendes and his wife, Fernanda Sousa Mendes. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature. Thank you for coming here.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. We welcome our guests.

Further introductions? The member from Stormont-Dundas—

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** South Glengarry.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):**—South Glengarry. I used to call it Charlottentown.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I used to, too.

It's a great privilege as I rise today to introduce Rose Spero and Carolyn Bourassa from the Canadian Cancer Society in our riding. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to introduce Lera Ryan and Mr. Van Geem from the Canadian Cancer Society in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I would like to introduce to the House and welcome to the Legislative Assembly Mary Ransom from the Canadian Cancer Society in Niagara.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I did, this morning, speak about Sharon Burns, but I do see her here right now so I wanted to welcome her. She's a Burlingtonian and she is the manager for Halton Canadian Cancer Society.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### CASINOS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Speaker, later today I will introduce my private member's bill, a bill entitled the Ensuring Local Voices in New Casino Gambling Development Act.

As you know, new casino development provides opportunities, but it also raises great debate amongst portions of the population. With recent plans to modernize the OLG, it is widely expected that there will be additional casino site development proposed throughout Ontario.

In response to this, we have heard from residents throughout the province that they would like to have a direct voice as to the potential development of new casinos in their community. My bill would legislate that a mandatory municipal referendum be completed and passed before any new casino development is allowed to proceed. We believe that, collectively, local communities and residents are best suited to make important decisions on issues like these.

It has long been our party's position to ensure local decision-making before casinos move forward. My bill will ensure that local communities are willing partners and hosts for all new casino development.

I would ask all of my honourable colleagues to stand up for their local communities and support this important piece of legislation.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides passenger and freight rail service, motor coach lines, communication and ferry services to the north. They also operate a railcar refurbishment division. The ONTC was created to provide vital services which private companies would not provide in the north. That's why we're shocked that the government would, without warning, abandon the ONTC.

In the budget negotiations, the Liberals refused to move on the ONR. They were willing to force an election on this issue, knowing full well that the people outside the north would blame the NDP for causing the election. Not only are the Liberals trying to eliminate public service in the north, but they're also willing to use northerners as pawns in their election strategy.

The Conservatives voted against the budget, and are attacking the NDP because we did not. But if an election had been called, would the Conservatives, if they formed government, save the ONTC? Well, they tried to kill it

once already, and the current member for Nipissing is on record as wanting to privatize it. So they, like the Liberals, are willing to use northerners as election pawns.

The NDP let the budget motion pass because we negotiated concessions that made it more fair to all Ontarians, but the ONTC was not part of that package. Northerners are frustrated and angry—justifiably so. But the fight for the ONTC is not over. The NDP will continue to work alongside northern councils, unions and others so that we have access to public transportation. Northerners can win this fight if we stand together.

### TREE PLANTING

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Many members in the House may know that this year's Earth Day theme is Mobilize the Earth. As part of the many Earth Day events that are taking place throughout this great province, I'd like to recognize the tremendous efforts of the students in my riding of Don Valley East, who have played and continue to play a significant role in protecting our environment.

As a former school board trustee, I've witnessed firsthand thousands of students in our riding trek to the Rouge Valley conservation area to plant nearly 50,000 trees in partnership with the Rouge Valley Naturalists. The Rouge Valley Naturalists, a not-for-profit organization, continues to implement curriculum-based outdoor education programs for schools and communities in order to protect, preserve and restore the natural heritage of the Rouge Valley.

This year, once again, I'll be joining students who will be participating in our annual tree planting event, which will be held on May 4. In addition, residents and families from my riding will be heading to the Rouge Valley on Saturday, May 5, to play their part in preserving that natural heritage.

We all must continue to mobilize our efforts in order to increase awareness and appreciation of the natural environment. Future generations depend on our actions to preserve and sustain our environment.

### STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Today I'd like to make a statement about a practice that was implemented in the Simcoe County District School Board in the fall of 2010. The use of large foam blocker pads on children with special needs unequivocally compromises their dignity and the progress made in the integration of these students into our school in the first place.

Adverse effects are already emerging. Advocates are telling me school board trustees are calling children with special needs "the SEAC kids," or rather the kids of the special education advisory committee. Some teachers are reporting fear towards children with special needs because these students are being managed with riot gear. A group of self-advocates with disabilities themselves write, "We want to be safe and supported in school and to be able to make friends ... now you have separated [us] apart even more."



## 1310

The only thing these mats are actually accomplishing is the undoing of community integration, the labelling and public humiliation of our most vulnerable students, and the creation of a culture of fear in our classrooms.

These blocker mats are generally out of practice countrywide for their ill effects on dignity, lessons learned over a decade ago. In 1998, a child with special needs was accidentally smothered with a blocker mat at a Hamilton group home. This is why insurance companies require special training for their use. Yet training itself can also prevent their use by equipping professionals with a host of other tools instead, just like in other school boards.

Blocker mats are not an acceptable management system for children with special needs, full stop. They're a violation of their human rights.

## ONTARIO PLACE

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** The debate over a casino at Ontario Place gets more and more intense. The public has spoken out against placing a casino at Ontario Place. Torontonians were clear in the 1997 referendum: "No casino," they said.

Now MGM would like to turn Ontario Place into a Las Vegas-style beachfront. I fully oppose this proposal and any other that would bring gambling to Toronto's public spaces.

Ontario Place has been an affordable, family-friendly destination for over 40 years, and the tradition is worth preserving. Rather than encourage our youth to take up gambling to pay off our deficit, we should be saving public spaces like this one.

The younger someone begins gambling, the more likely they are to develop an addiction later on. Our youth already have higher rates of problem gambling—it's about 7%—without a waterfront casino.

We keep hearing that this government won't impose a casino on an unwilling community. If it takes a referendum for the province to listen to the people, fine, let's have one, but let's not make the city pay the full cost. This is a provincially driven idea, so the province should either take responsibility by sharing the cost of a referendum, or they could just listen to what we've been saying all along: no casino.

Let's keep Ontario Place a public space for children and families, not megamalls, Ferris wheels or casinos.

LAFLÈCHE FAMILY FOUNDATION  
FONDATION FAMILLE LAFLÈCHE

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I'd like to take this moment to introduce to this House a special family from eastern Ontario, the Laflèche family.

Recently, the Laflèche Family Foundation donated \$300,000 to the Cornwall Community Hospital Foundation's To Your Health campaign in their efforts to purchase a new MRI scanner and digital urology table.

The foundation hopes to raise \$3.5 million by the end of the year in order to equip an expanded and renovated McConnell Avenue site of the Cornwall Community Hospital.

I've known Mr. André Laflèche personally and professionally for 25 years. He's a successful businessman in eastern Ontario, and he wants to recognize his extensive family roots that extend right into my riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Mr. Laflèche continues to say that he wishes to share some of the values embraced by his family, which are respect for all, dignity, inclusivity and understanding, all contributing toward a strong and healthy community.

I agree with Mr. Laflèche, and I would like to acknowledge the Laflèche family's humble appreciation of the values of Ontarians in all matters of life, and particularly toward the importance of quality public health care for all, in both official languages.

Les valeurs estimées par la famille Laflèche sont les mêmes que celles qui sont importantes pour le gouvernement de l'Ontario. Nous remercions très sincèrement la famille Laflèche pour leur don généreux. Thank you to the Laflèche family.

## BASKETBALL

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I may need some glasses. I think I see Carole Watson here from the Canadian Cancer Society. Welcome, Carole.

Last month, I made a statement regarding the London Lightning winning the National Basketball League of Canada. Well, we have something just as important occurring: The St. Thomas Shock under-13 girls' basketball team won the provincials this past week.

The Shock headed into the finals to face Scarborough, a team they had lost to earlier by one point. The team worked well but trailed Scarborough by four points throughout the game.

Finally, with three minutes remaining, team veterans Faith Bisson and Emily Deven stepped up, using their experience under pressure to drop some crucial baskets, giving the girls a one-point lead, which they maintained. Leading up to the provincials, this team had taken home a bronze and two silver medals.

I congratulate team members Emily Deven, Faith Bisson, Abby Waterhouse, Breana Struthers, Kacey Pallister, Callista Tryon, Abigail Leslie, Taylor Bogart, Caitlin Douglass, Miranda Gowdey and Ally Carr.

I'd like to congratulate the coaches who volunteer their time: Steve Bogart, Chris Deven and Kevin Gowdey.

## ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Like parents across Ontario, our government understands that creating a safe and positive learning environment is essential to helping students succeed. That's why we introduced legislation that, if passed, would help end bullying in our schools for all children.

I'm proud to support Bill 13 and, like my colleagues on this side of the House, I want to see it pass quickly so that due protections can get into schools in time for September 2012. That's why I'm dismayed that, despite every effort to work with the official opposition, the PCs are engaging in shameful delaying tactics and refusing to debate. It's clear the Conservatives were absent without leadership during the budget. Now they're absent without leadership in the Legislature and they're playing games with important issues to protect all vulnerable children. On this bill alone they've delayed 15 hours and 37 minutes with nine bells. That could mean that kids getting bullied might not get the help they need come this September.

I was elected by the families in my riding to work hard and tackle very important issues; so is every other member in this House. With many challenges facing our province today, it's time for the members of the opposition to stop playing games and do the right thing for the families and kids they were elected to serve.

#### HUCK FINN YOUTH FISHING DAY

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Each year, my community of Uxbridge in my riding of Durham welcomes spring with the Huck Finn Youth Fishing Day. This Saturday, April 28, marks the 10th anniversary of this outstanding family event at Elgin Pond in Uxbridge.

I'd like to commend Pat Higgins and his team from the Canadian Tire store in Uxbridge for hosting the day. The many sponsors and volunteers will ensure that children and teens have fun while learning about conservation and our natural environment. Proud fishing day supporters include the Uxbridge Legion, the Optimist Club, the Uxbridge Times Journal, the Uxbridge Standard, Durham Regional Police, the Police Association of Ontario, the Pickering Rod and Gun Club, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Toronto Sportsmen's Show, and Zehrs.

Amanda Ferraro from the municipality of Uxbridge and Bob Izumi of Fishing Forever are also among the fishing day organizers.

Local youth aged 15 and under will be invited to try their luck in catching one of the hundreds of brook trout that have been stocked in the Elgin Pond. There's a parade, prizes, gift bags, food, and experienced anglers ready to help the next generation learn how to fish.

This is an outstanding community event. I would encourage everyone to support youth and outdoor activities, and I would welcome everyone to kids' fishing day in Uxbridge this Saturday.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Nipissing on a point of order.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I stand on a point of order, Speaker. Thank you. The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane recently spoke of my record on Ontario Northland, and I want to remind—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member will take his seat, please. The member knows that correcting

the record is only the purview of the member herself. That is not a point of order.

I do want to make a point, and the point that I would like to make now is, I'm becoming a little dismayed at how statements could be used for other purposes than to announce what's going on in your riding or to announce something that is satisfactory in terms of policy or procedure of the House. I would ask all of us to reconsider, when making statements, that it's about how good things are happening in the province.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

What I'll also say is, that was a statement for all members.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### SKIN CANCER PREVENTION ACT, 2012

##### LOI DE 2012 SUR LA PRÉVENTION DU CANCER DE LA PEAU

M<sup>me</sup> Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 74, An Act to help prevent skin cancer / Projet de loi 74, Loi aidant à prévenir le cancer de la peau.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

1320

M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas: The bill prohibits marketing and selling tanning services to persons under the age of 18. The bill also requires the establishment and maintenance of a registry relating to the use of tanning equipment. Persons who own or operate an establishment at which tanning services are provided are required to ensure that persons involved in providing the service or treatment receive training and that signage respecting the health effects of the service or treatment are posted at the establishment where the services or treatment are provided. The bill also makes it an offence to contravene certain provisions.

La loi est très simple : pas de marketing ou de lit de bronzage pour les moins de 18 ans; enregistrement de tous ceux qui ont de l'équipement de bronzage; de la formation pour ceux qui offrent des sessions de bronzage; et des enseignes claires qui démontrent le lien entre les lits de bronzage et le cancer. Merci, monsieur le Président.

##### ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OPERATOR ACT, 2012

##### LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ D'EXPLOITATION DU RÉSEAU D'ÉLECTRICITÉ DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Bentley moved first reading of the following bill:



Bill 75, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority, to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 75, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité pour fusionner la Société indépendante d'exploitation du réseau d'électricité et l'Office de l'électricité de l'Ontario, modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The minister for a short statement.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** During ministerial statements.

#### ENSURING LOCAL VOICES IN NEW CASINO GAMBLING DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 VISANT À GARANTIR LA CONSULTATION DES POPULATIONS LOCALES AVANT LA CRÉATION DE NOUVEAUX CASINOS

Mr. McNaughton moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 76, An Act to amend the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation Act, 1999 / *Projet de loi 76, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la Société des loteries et des jeux de l'Ontario.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Since the government announced the modernization of the OLG, we have heard from hundreds of residents throughout Ontario expressing their interest in having a direct voice as to the location of any new or proposed casino development within their own local community.

As a former three-term municipal councillor, I understand the importance of working with our local and municipal partners. Accordingly, this bill amends the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation Act, 1999, to adopt by reference the rule set out in the current regulations made under the act that a casino or charity casino cannot be established in a municipality or on a First Nation reserve unless the electors in the municipality or the members of the council, as the case may be, approve of the establishment by way of a referendum.

I encourage all honourable members to support this important piece of legislation.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Unanimous consent required: agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 32 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### ELECTRICITY RESTRUCTURING RESTRUCTURATION DU SECTEUR DE L'ÉLECTRICITÉ

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I rise to speak to the introduction of the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, 2012. This act proposes to merge the Ontario Power Authority with the Independent Electricity System Operator.

Elle améliorerait l'efficacité et entraînerait des économies en supprimant les chevauchements de fonctions, et tirerait parti de l'expertise présente dans chaque organisme. La fusion des organismes ferait économiser jusqu'à 25 millions de dollars aux contribuables chaque année.

It would create efficiencies and savings by removing overlapping functions and take advantage of the expert skills within each agency. Merging the agencies would save up to \$25 million annually for taxpayers.

The electricity system has changed a great deal in the past eight years. We're rebuilding and modernizing our energy system, using cleaner sources of power instead of dirty coal, saving billions of dollars in future costs, such as health care costs, while at the same time creating new jobs. As we modernize, we're looking at every aspect to provide the best value for Ontarians, and this includes finding efficiencies within our electricity system.

Through our modernization efforts, the electricity sector in Ontario looks very different than it did a decade ago, and it is in this context that I introduce today's legislation. Increasing efficiency will help make the system more affordable for ratepayers across the province. We've been working with the NDP, and they specifically asked us to consider electricity agency consolidation.

The new entity would play a key role in electricity planning and help streamline the system, making it more responsive to changing conditions. A single new entity would allow for a more seamless, coordinated approach to planning as we integrate new renewable energy

projects into the mix and replace the last coal-fired plants by the end of 2014.

Their proposed amalgamation offers many advantages by creating opportunities for more integrated electricity system planning by bringing real-time, medium-term and long-term planning under the same roof. It would create efficiencies and savings by removing overlapping functions and take advantage of the expertise and skills within each agency.

This legislation recognizes the importance of establishing a functional separation to ensure the independence and integrity of market operations while providing the amalgamated entity with an ability to find efficiencies and savings.

This merger is in addition to a number of important steps that we've taken to reduce costs in the energy sector. We asked our agencies last year to find savings and they responded, finding nearly \$1 billion in efficiencies. We launched our Ontario Distribution Sector Panel just a few weeks ago, whose goal is to find efficiencies within our LDC sector.

As we modernize our system, eliminate dirty coal and kick-start our new clean energy revolution in Ontario, we know that we need to take all measures we can to keep rates as low as possible for Ontarians. The measures I discussed above, plus our clean energy benefit, which takes 10% off people's bills, will help Ontarians through this important transition.

I want to emphasize that the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator have provided excellent service to the people of Ontario. The time, though, is right for us to examine whether we're providing all of the services in the most efficient way possible. We must keep our focus on the interests of families and businesses.

We are committed to building a clean, modern and reliable electricity system. We're investing in infrastructure renewal and clean energy generation, as well as new smart grid and other emerging technologies. We are North American clean energy leaders, and we're working to positively transform the province today, laying the groundwork for a better tomorrow.

## CANCER CARE

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I'd like to begin by welcoming the people from the Canadian Cancer Society who are with us in the Legislature right now and were here for breakfast this morning.

April is Daffodil Month in Canada. It's a time when we have a chance to show people living with cancer that we stand with them in their fight.

1330

April is the time to fight back, because every three minutes, another Canadian is getting the news that they have been diagnosed with cancer.

Not too long ago, a diagnosis of cancer was the worst news anyone could imagine. But today, thanks to tremen-

dous strides in detection and treatment, many types of cancer are manageable and indeed curable.

Our government is working hard to improve the provincial cancer system because the number of people in Ontario living with cancer is expected to rise by 40% over the next 10 years. That's why we're investing in things like colorectal, breast and cervical cancer screening, because early detection is key. We're investing in regional cancer centres that provide radiation and chemotherapy. We're investing in more cancer surgeries to reduce wait times and improve patient outcomes. And, of course, we're investing in new cancer drugs.

When it comes to fighting cancer, one of the best things we can do is fight tobacco. We have to continue the war on tobacco so Ontarians can lead healthier lives. Cigarettes are the number one cause of preventable cancer, and tobacco-related disease costs Ontario's health care system about \$1.6 billion every year.

We've already come a long way—accomplished a great deal with smoke-free Ontario. We renewed that strategy last April. With the help of partners like Cancer Care Ontario, we're working to modernize health care delivery and direct a clearer focus on quality for patients and value for our health care dollars.

That focus is evident in our action plan for health care, which starts with keeping Ontario healthy, and detecting disease like cancer early is an important part of our plan. That's why we will step up our cancer screening efforts, including online personalized cancer risk profiles. This tool will use patients' personal, medical and family history to measure their risk of cancer and then match people at higher risk to screening programs and prevention supports or genetic testing.

In March 2011, we announced a \$15-million investment over three years to expand the Ontario breast screening program, the OBSP, to high-risk women aged 30 to 69 years of age. This program provides funding for an additional 90,000 breast screens to women at high risk for breast cancer.

Our goal is to reduce the number of deaths from breast cancer through early detection. Our target is to screen 71% of women aged 50 to 69 every two years by 2012-13. We started at 66% in 2008; by the fall, we expect to be at 68%, but our target is 71%. We will continue to work towards our goal to provide better screening for all women.

Since the program was launched in 1990, the OBSP has provided over 4.1 million screens to over 1.2 million women aged 50 and older across Ontario, and it has detected 22,000 cancers, the majority in the early stages, which of course improves survival rates.

Speaker, I'm particularly proud of our colorectal cancer screening program, the first province-wide population-based program in Canada. Colorectal cancer is highly curable if detected early, so this screening program is crucial.

Our investments in additional cancer surgeries have reduced wait times for these vital services, and all that great progress is thanks to our significant investment in



the wait time strategy: \$1.7 billion for 2.9 million key procedures since 2003-04.

I know how important Ontario's regional cancer centres are and what a tremendous difference they make in the lives of patients and their families. I've seen first-hand the high-quality care the regional cancer centre in London provides to my constituents and many families from across southwestern Ontario. Beyond treatments and procedures, they give patients peace of mind in what must be one of the most trying health experiences a family will face. They're not only providing the right care, but these centres help keep patients close to home and close to loved ones, and that, Speaker, is the right place.

Earlier this month, I was delighted to be in Kingston for the grand opening of the expanded cancer centre at Kingston General Hospital, and I look forward to the opening in St. Catharines of the cancer centre there. The cancer centre in Kingston has two new radiation bunkers, which will support the approximately 130 radiation treatment patients per day. The expansion is 50% more space for chemotherapy treatment, which provides care to over 60 more patients per day. The space, I can tell you, is beautiful and spacious, overlooking Lake Ontario.

When it comes to cancer drugs, the new funding program ensures access to new high-cost intravenous cancer drugs. Over 23,000 patients benefit annually from this program. In November 2011, we introduced the case-by-case review program, which considers funding of cancer drugs for patients with rare situations that are life-threatening and require treatment with a drug that is not funded or does not meet the criteria for funding.

I want to show my support for people living with cancer and their families by wearing a daffodil and raising awareness of this disease, and I encourage all my colleagues in the House to do the same.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Responses?

#### ELECTRICITY RESTRUCTURING

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I rise to make comment on the introduction of the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, 2012, which amends the Electricity Act to allow for the merger of the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority.

Last week, the minister announced the consolidation of the agencies and claimed that it would save up to \$25 million a year, but we know that this merger to create the OESO will simply not realize any real savings for taxpayers and ratepayers.

Our party believes that the Ontario Power Authority should not be merged but be scrapped altogether. It was formed seven years ago as a 15-person transitional body created by this government to manage Ontario's energy supply. Today, it's a 235-person permanent entity where 87 people earn over \$100,000 a year and the CEO earns over \$570,000 a year. In just seven years, it has burned through over \$375 million in expenditures, and its expenses have risen from \$14 million in 2005 to \$76.4 million today.

By shuffling the bureaucrats down the hall and creating one super agency, this move proves that the government still doesn't recognize the severity of Ontario's debt crisis. The government has claimed it will save money but has yet to show us how it plans to do so.

This legislation also addresses how the minister is to go about submitting an energy plan for the province's long-term energy needs. However, it does not set out any time frames as to how often, or when, the minister is required to do this.

It is my hope that the minister will soon explain in detail how he plans to achieve the savings he claims with regard to this move, but moreover, he needs to revisit his government's other energy policies, which the Auditor General tells us will send electricity prices for Ontario families skyrocketing by 46% by 2015.

There was nothing in the budget that brought relief to families. For the record, I'm the only member north of Highway 17 who stood up and voted against that budget and against the selling of Ontario Northland, no matter how hard the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane attempted to spin it.

#### CANCER CARE

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Again, welcome to the members of the Canadian Cancer Society who are with us today in the House.

Tomorrow is Daffodil Day, and on this special day we ask Ontarians, and in fact all Canadians, to take a moment to reflect upon the thousands of people who are living with cancer and to support those who are courageously fighting against this disease.

Daffodils are the first flower in spring. After having survived a long and treacherous winter, daffodils are the first sign of hope as they blossom with vigour. The daffodil pin shows support to Canadians living with cancer, letting them know that no one has to face cancer alone. You can also wear a virtual daffodil through Twitter and Facebook using twibbons. I encourage everyone to participate in this awareness campaign.

1340

The Canadian Cancer Society's ads aptly convey its message on cancer: Every three minutes, cancer picks a fight with another Canadian. In 2011, there were over 25,000 deaths and 63,000 new cases of cancer reported. This is a very serious concern. But we are not letting cancer win easily. Collaboration among patients and their families, researchers, schools, hospitals, government and society at large shows that we are picking our very own fight with this disease. For cancer patients and families who are on this arduous journey, I say to you again that you are not alone.

This fight against cancer involves increasing awareness. The Canadian Cancer Society is here today bringing education to Queen's Park on this devastating disease, and in particular on melanoma. I want to extend a special thanks for your invaluable services in raising awareness

and your advocacy on banning indoor tanning for minors, which France Gélinas will speak about later.

I believe cancer is a multipartisan issue. No one group or party can tackle this disease on their own. I am pleased to say that Ontarians are living longer and more productive lives because of the work accomplished by all of us here today.

Again, thank you to the Canadian Cancer Society, and especially to the valued volunteers, for all of your incredible work. I encourage all Canadians to do something special for those living with cancer or to contribute in some way to the fight against this disease on Daffodil Day.

Thank you, Speaker.

### ELECTRICITY RESTRUCTURING

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I rise to respond to the Minister of Energy. The Minister of Energy has brought forward a bill today. He claims that there will be savings in the range of \$25 million a year. Frankly, it remains to be seen. There's a lot of material that has to be put on the table before I think we can accept that claim.

But more importantly to the people of Ontario, outside of this chamber a privatization panel is moving forward and looking at the privatization of local utilities across this province. Speaker, already people who buy private power contracts sold on a door-to-door basis are paying 15% to 65% more for their electricity than they would otherwise pay. We have to keep our eyes on the ball. If that privatization panel goes forward with those recommendations, we are looking at those companies that go door to door taking over our local distribution utility, putting on the backs of Ontarians the cost of the profits that they will be shipping out of Ontario.

Whenever we get into the question of electricity, we're talking about the future stability and sustainability of this province. The minister is touching on a small part of what we have to address. We have to make sure that people in Ontario know there's a lot more going on than this bill.

Thank you, Speaker.

### CANCER CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to respond to the minister, who I'm really happy understands the importance of not only cancer treatment and support for those who have cancer, but also the importance of prevention. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we took more concrete steps here in this Legislature to promote cancer prevention?

Today, I would like to draw attention to one aspect of cancer prevention which Ontario has yet to act upon, even though other jurisdictions have. This issue is indoor tanning. Twice before, legislation has been introduced in this House to restrict access to indoor tanning for youth and to increase regulation for this industry. Today I have

just reintroduced this legislation, and I hope that I can count on the support of each and every one of you.

As everyone in this Legislature should know, damage caused by ultraviolet light can lead to skin cancer. What seems like a harmless sunburn or a healthy tan causes cancer later in life, including deadly melanoma.

Another thing that everyone here is probably aware of is the popularity of indoor tanning with youth. Proms and graduations are right around the corner, Mr. Speaker. Those teens are flocking to tanning salons. Kate Neale, who spoke earlier today, is pretty; she's intelligent; she's eloquent. She is a very brave young woman who is turning 22 years old today. Happy birthday, Kate. Kate was one of those teens who not only used tanning beds, but who also worked for a tanning salon, which fed her misinformation about tanning and which required, as a way to keep her job, that she maintain a tan. Today, after multiple biopsies and three surgeries to remove melanoma, she is a cancer survivor.

Despite the growing number of stories like Kate's, one in 10 are using tanning beds. If you look at the youth in grade 12, 21% of Ontarian youth in grade 12 use tanning beds. Why? That's because the tanning industry directly markets to those young people in their yearbooks, at their graduations and during prom nights—and there's nothing that's being done in Ontario to help protect those youth from an industry that is purposely misleading them about the health risks of indoor tanning.

Melanoma is now the most common cancer among youth aged 25 to 29. This is the most common cancer. And do you know what? People who tan before the age of 30 have a 75% increased chance of developing skin cancer and melanoma.

It is time to act. Thousands of people have asked us to act. Thousands more have sent postcards. It is time for the people in this Legislature to listen to the youth, to listen to the Canadian Cancer Society and others and pass this bill.

### NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak on the National Day of Mourning, after which I would ask that the House observe a moment of silence.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The request for unanimous consent has been required. Agreed? Agreed.

Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** This April 28 will be a solemn day here in Ontario. The 28th is the day we pause and remember workers who have been killed or injured on the job. It is the official Day of Mourning.

This weekend, people across this province will gather in ceremonies in city squares and at union halls. Flags will be lowered to half-mast to honour loved ones, co-workers and friends. Heads will be bowed.

Since the 1980s, the Ontario government has recognized the Day of Mourning. It is a day recognized in



cities across Canada and in 80 countries around the world. But it is much more than a day of remembrance; it is a day when we reaffirm our commitment to do whatever we can to prevent workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses. It is a day to remember those we have lost and to acknowledge those who are injured. It is also a day to renew our resolve to fight for the living, to work towards a brighter future where we eliminate workplace hazards.

In the year 2010, 57 people in Ontario lost their lives due to a traumatic injury on the job. That's more than one person every week who died in Ontario due to a preventable workplace injury. No one should fear when they leave for work in the morning that they may not return at the end of the day safe and sound.

In 2010, over 184,000 people in this province suffered lost-time injuries or illnesses as a result of their work. There were many more, of course, who were able to recover and return to their job, and we give thanks for this, but others were not so lucky. Injuries and illnesses changed their lives forever, and they forever changed the lives of their loved ones.

Tragically, workplace injuries and illnesses have a serious and, at times, a lasting impact on families. The numbers I cited are not mere statistics; they are human lives. They are our sons and daughters, our husbands and wives, and our friends and neighbours. That's why all of us must continue to fight to protect Ontario workers and their families.

Since 2003, we have significantly lowered the rate of workplace injury in this province. One of the reasons for that decrease is that since 2003 our government has nearly doubled the number of Ministry of Labour health and safety inspectors in the province.

There are other important steps we have taken to ensure a safer, healthier future for Ontario workers. One step was the creation and passage of Bill 160, which amended the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and allows us to better manage and align Ontario's workplace health and safety system.

**1350**

Another step taken was our appointment of the new chief prevention officer, who will better coordinate and focus our efforts and those of our health and safety partners. This means that health and safety enforcement and prevention will be under the same roof for the very first time. Our new chief prevention officer will work to help ensure all Ontarians know their rights and their responsibilities under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.

To protect young workers all through the summer, Ministry of Labour health and safety inspectors will conduct inspections in workplaces where students and young people go to for summer jobs. And, Speaker, tomorrow I will be in Guelph to announce a province-wide safety blitz targeting our new and young workers.

We've done these things and we're committed to doing more, but we can't do it alone. Together, all of us must work to build a strong safety culture—a culture of

prevention in our province's workplaces. Together, we can prevent workplace deaths and injuries.

In a few days we'll observe a moment of silence for those who have suffered in workplace incidents. This Saturday, April 28, I ask all people of this province, whether you're an employee or an employer, to stop and ask yourself if every step is being taken to prevent an injury in your workplace, because workplace health and safety is everyone's responsibility.

So let us—every one of us—rededicate ourselves to making sure Ontario workers go home safe and sound at the end of the day. We owe the working people of this province nothing less.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Response? The member from Chatham-Kent-Middlesex.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Essex.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Essex.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister of Labour as well for her kind words.

It's with a heavy heart that I rise today to mark an upcoming National Day of Mourning to commemorate workers that have been injured or killed while performing their duties. This Saturday, April 28, the flag on Parliament Hill in our nation's capital will fly at half-mast as a tribute to the men and women who paid far too high a price for simply showing up and doing their jobs. The statistics are startling. In 2010 alone, there were over 1,000 workplace deaths in this country. That's almost three people losing their lives each and every day while on the job.

I have the honour of serving my caucus as the deputy critic of labour, a role that I take very seriously. In my short time as a member of this House and as a representative for my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, I've heard dozens of stories, from industry spokespeople to regular folks that come into my constituency office looking for help with their disability claims. Every one of them has a different concern, a different risk and a different solution. Listening to these stories is a task of paramount importance.

Many of my colleagues in this House come from former careers in industries where safety is paramount—farming, engineering or skilled trades, for example. The sad fact is, probably many of us here today know of an Ontario worker that has been severely injured while at work.

Since 1993, Canada has been losing an average of almost 900 people per year to on-the-job accidents. Add that up over two decades and you have 17,000 people—more than four times the size of the community of Blenheim in my riding of Chatham-Kent. But these workers are more than just statistics. They're moms and dads, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and friends that make up our communities.

Since autumn of last year, we here in Toronto have been subject to a series of terrifying stories of lives lost on the job. On October 11, Kyle Knox, a 24-year-old construction worker, was killed when a drilling rig fell on his loader at a York University job site. Friends remem-

bered Kyle as a prankster, a handsome, fun-loving guy that lived life to the fullest and was planning to marry his girlfriend of five years. I know all of us remember the tragedy in Burlington this past February, when a Via Rail train derailed, killing three Via workers on an otherwise quiet afternoon.

There are a number of avenues we can take as legislators to address this tragic reality. We may try to create better workplace safety laws or take the time to listen to the various organizations that fight every day for workers' rights.

I personally believe that we could take action immediately by addressing the looming issue of the funding shortfall at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and ensuring that workers and taxpayers are getting the value they've paid for. But nothing will repair the situation faster than an increased awareness of the inherent risks in every job and constant vigilance not just for our personal safety, but for that of our colleagues.

I'm proud to say that when I was in the private sector and responsible for human resource development, I managed a great staff who were often responsible for providing health and safety training for over 4,000 unionized staff. That's a positive note I'd like to end on. For every worker injured on the job, we must remember that there are hundreds—thousands—more who look out for each other. It is possible to avoid the human error and equipment failure that can lead to the worst-case scenarios.

We owe it to each other and to our families to look out for each other, and to work together to ensure that moms and dads, brothers and sisters all arrive home at the end of each day safe and sound.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's an honour to stand here today as a worker, someone who came out of the construction field, a member of the Labourers union, Local 625, health and safety director, trainer, to stand to remember workers in this country, and indeed across the world, who have died due to injury or illness while going to work.

Each and every year, we stand and deliver the statistics, and they are shocking and they continue to be shocking. But it strikes me as though they've become actuarially acceptable; that in industry, with the numbers of people who go to work each and every day, it's a given that some will fall sick, some will be injured and indeed some will die. It begs the question: At what point does this House, this Legislature, and across the country—when do we decide that it is completely unacceptable that any person should go to work without knowing that they will come home at the end of the day?

It's particularly interesting that we have representatives from the cancer society here today, because I'll remind members of this House that we live in a country that still allows the mining of asbestos, that still allows the export of asbestos, a known carcinogen, and this happens underneath our noses. In that light, how can we indeed stand firm on our own resolve to change the way

our health and safety legislation is enforced and acted on proactively?

I don't believe we can do that in a real, concerted effort without acknowledging, first, that we have so much more work to do. Indeed, we know the tragedies that this country has suffered. The Westray mine tragedy: It is the 20th anniversary of that tragedy, where 26 workers lost their lives. Eleven of them are still down in the mine, a kilometre below the earth in the Foord seam, a seam that was known to be dangerous for decades prior to that explosion. It's been said that the most important thing to come up from a mine is the miner. Shouldn't that be the case for every worker in this country, in this province: that the most important thing to come home is the worker, not the paycheck?

We have to commit ourselves—and I appreciate the comments from my colleagues the Minister of Labour and the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex. I believe that they are true to their intentions that we need to do more. But until we see a day without incidents like that where the young woman who worked in a tanning salon was told that she had to have a tan, she had to promote that industry that we know has been causing cancer, we are not doing enough; we will not be doing enough.

**1400**

Young workers in this province who find themselves more and more in precarious working positions aren't afforded the opportunity to have in-depth training such as I had, working in a unionized environment. I submit to the honourable Minister of Labour that she should commit herself to working with trade unions and affiliates, because they have been carrying the load in progressive health and safety legislation for decades in this province and can guide us to where we can make headway in making sure that workplaces are safer not only for young people but for everyone in this province.

Indeed, everyone has a story of someone they know who has been hurt or injured. One of my colleagues, Takis Escoto, died last year leaving a construction site—wasn't even active on the site; walking away, ending his day, going home, a young worker who was hit by a piece of heavy machinery. It's unacceptable; there's no reason for that. We have to commit the appropriate levels of funding, the appropriate levels of enforcement—and that is the missing piece.

I've heard some indications that the province is doing as much as they can by enhancing some enforcement, but it is not enough. It certainly is not enough, and it certainly doesn't pay tribute to those who have fallen. It doesn't give them the hope that things will get better when it comes to our health and safety legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and the members of this Legislature for giving unanimous consent to this day to honour those who have fallen. But let us commit ourselves to working as hard as we can to bring those rates down to zero. That is the only acceptable number.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would like to thank all members for their comments. At this time, as part of the unanimous consent, we would ask that every-



one in the House rise for a moment of silence in honour of those who have died or have been injured or sick on the job.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

## PETITIONS

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt;

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and Oak Ridges moraine;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries;

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt."

### INDOOR TANNING EQUIPMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mr. Speaker, I have been very patient, waiting to present all these petitions.

**Interjection:** How many?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** There are thousands and thousands and thousands of petitions that I'm presenting today. Some of them are in the form of postcards from the south York region of the Canadian Cancer Society. Others, also in the form of postcards, are from the Ontario Medical Students Association, and the rest are mainly from youth from every one of the 107 ridings in this province. Actually, it's kind of heavy, so I'm only going to hold one—we've just said we have to protect workers here.

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence linking tanning bed use to increased cancer risk, the World Health Organization considers tanning beds a group 1 carcinogen, and use of tanning beds before the age of 30 raises one's risk of melanoma by 75%; and

"Whereas many groups, including the Canadian Cancer Society and the Ontario Medical Association,

support a ban on the use of indoor tanning equipment by youths under the age of 18; and

"Whereas the provinces of British Columbia and Nova Scotia have passed legislation banning youths from using indoor tanning equipment, and governments around the world are considering similar legislation; and

"Whereas there is broad public support in Ontario for increased regulation of the tanning industry, with 83% supporting a ban on indoor tanning for those under 18;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning youths under the age of 18 from using indoor tanning equipment except in the case of medical need."

I fully support this petition. So do the tens of thousands of people who have sent me those petitions and the people here in the Legislature. I will sign it and only send a few copies down—because we don't want to injure our little pages here—with page Jenny.

### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease is a degenerative brain disease that causes thinking and memory impairment. Alzheimer's disease is progressive, worsens over time, and will eventually lead to death;

"Whereas there are an estimated 181,000 Ontarians diagnosed with Alzheimer's and related dementia today, and that number is set to increase by 40% in the next 10 years;

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease creates social, emotional and economic burdens on the family and friends of those suffering with the disease;

"Whereas the total economic burden of dementia in Ontario is expected to increase by more than \$770 million per year through to 2020;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to establish an Alzheimer's advisory council to advise the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on matters pertaining to strategy respecting research, treatment and the prevention of Alzheimer's and other related dementia."

I sign my name to this petition and wholeheartedly concur and will give it to page Safa.

### UTILITY CHARGES

**Mr. Rob Leone:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 (the 'act'), allows a municipality to add public utility arrears incurred by a tenant to the municipal tax bill of the owner; and

"Whereas Ontario regulation 581/06 permits such arrears to have priority lien status under the act; and

"Whereas these provisions reversed the long-standing law in this area that held that a landlord was not responsible for utility charges where the landlord was not the consumer; and

"Whereas landlords may now be burdened unfairly, and potentially catastrophically, with fees and charges they have no control over; and

"Whereas these provisions will also impact tenants who are not in arrears with their utility payments but who will now face rent increases and/or increases in utility payments where such payments are pooled as landlords attempt to recoup these outstanding liabilities; and

"Whereas a number of municipalities, including Penetanguishene, Bracebridge and Niagara Falls, have reversed such policies as a result of the demonstrated and unprecedented negative impacts on landlords and tenants; and

"Whereas municipalities and utility providers in Ontario already have at their disposal a number of means by which they can control or collect outstanding arrears, including by requiring deposits for the utility service pursuant to the Public Utilities Act and by seizing personal property in the possession of the ratepayer;

"Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"Repeal section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, and amend Ontario regulation 581/06 accordingly, to ensure that property owners are not responsible for the payment of outstanding utility arrears where they are not the consumer."

Mr. Speaker, I will sign this petition and hand it to page William.

#### CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I have a petition signed by some members from my community.

"Whereas the operation of cellular commercial transmission equipment on new or existing cell towers has been proposed near residential areas in Oakville and other communities around the province; and

"Whereas Industry Canada has ultimate authority to approve the location of cellular communications transmission equipment under the federal Radiocommunication Act; and

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"Whereas the province of Ontario has no jurisdiction in the placement of cell communications equipment or services; and

"Whereas many area residents and local elected officials have expressed concerns with the location due to its proximity to residential areas;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada review the siting of cellular commercial communications transmission equipment in residential areas; and

"That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada place a moratorium on the installation of cellular commercial communication transmission equipment on new or existing towers within 1,000 metres

of residential homes until an improved separation distance is established by the federal government."

I agree with this, I've signed it and will send it down with Noah.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a report from Ontario's Auditor General on the province's air ambulance service, Ornge, found a web of questionable financial deals where tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars have been wasted and public safety compromised;

"Whereas Ornge officials created a 'mini-conglomerate' of more than a dozen private entities that enriched former senior officers and left taxpayers on the hook for \$300 million in debt;

"Whereas government funding for Ornge climbed 20% to \$700 million, while the number of patients airlifted actually declined by 6%;

"Whereas Ornge was paid \$7,700 per patient transported by land ambulance despite subcontracting this service for \$1,700 per patient, a full \$6,000 per patient less;

"Whereas, after receiving questions of serious concerns at Ornge from the opposition in 2010 and early 2011, the Minister of Health did not provide adequate oversight, ignored the red flags and reassured the Legislature that all was well; and

"Whereas, on March 21, 2012, the Legislature voted to create a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals surrounding Ornge;

"Whereas such a committee provides protection from disciplinary action against employees who testify;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government of Ontario immediately appoint a special all-party select committee to investigate the scandals surrounding Ornge."

I agree with this petition. I will be signing it.

#### TOURISM

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas tourism is a vital contributor to the economy of northwestern Ontario, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars into the province's economy from other provinces and the United States, unlike other regions in the province whose target demographic is people who already reside in Ontario;

"Whereas northwestern Ontario's tourist economy has been under attack by government policies such as the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, the harmonized sales tax ..., the strong Canadian dollar and difficulties passing through the Canada/United States border; and

"Whereas studies have shown that tourism in the northwest nets significantly more money per stay than



other regions of the province, in part due to visitors frequenting historical sites, parks and roadside attractions that they learn about through travel information centres;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To keep the travel information centres in Fort Frances, Kenora and Rainy River open permanently to ensure that northwestern Ontario maximizes the benefit of our tourist economy."

I proudly support this and will give this to page Katarina to bring forward.

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I have a petition from the residents of York South–Weston.

"Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

"Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

"Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice."

I agree with this petition and I will hand it over to page Sarah, and sign it as well.

### SOCIAL WORK

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition signed by a great many people from around the province, a lot of them from my great riding of Oxford. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many children and their families have been and continue to be adversely affected by the actions of CAS workers who are engaged in the practice of social work but not registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers ... as required under law; and

"Whereas unregulated and unregistered CAS workers are entering schools, detaining children and violating the rights of children and parents under sections 7 and 9 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to the right to life, liberty and security of their persons, as well as the right not to be detained; and

"Whereas the Social Work and Social Service Work Act (1998) ... requires that all persons who engage in the practice of social work in the province of Ontario must be registered with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers; and

"Whereas the college has a duty under sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the act to regulate the practice of social work

in Ontario to protect the public interest but has failed to fulfill its legal mandate since the year 2000; and

"Whereas the unlawful practice of social work by CAS workers is causing significant harm to children and families and bringing disrepute to the profession of social work and is undermining the administration of justice and the rule of law;

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take steps to protect children and families in the following way:

"That the government of Ontario take steps to ensure that all CAS workers in the province of Ontario who are engaged in the practice of social work be required to be in compliance" with "the Social Work and Social Service Work Act ... and to be registered with the college, as is now required under existing legislation."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition.

### ONTARIO PLACE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I made it.

"Whereas Ontario Place was dedicated 'To the People of Ontario—Past, Present and Future'; and

"Whereas Ontario Place is nestled within a public space beloved and used extensively by the people of Toronto and Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario Place has been an affordable family-oriented destination for the people of Ontario since 1971; and

"Whereas the Premier of Ontario has initiated a review to revitalize Ontario Place; and

"Whereas the government has been silent in its vision for this public space and any effects on surrounding residential areas;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that Ontario Place remain a public space for all Ontarians to enjoy, and further, that no casinos or other gambling facilities be built or placed at Ontario Place."

I support this petition strongly with all the 300 or 400 people who have signed this petition.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS IN AMATEUR SPORTS ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 SUR LA PROTECTION DES MINEURS PARTICIPANT À DES SPORTS AMATEURS

Mr. Ouellette moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to provide protection for minors participating in amateur sports / Projet de loi 24, Loi visant à protéger les mineurs qui participent à des sports amateurs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I very much appreciate this opportunity; I believe it's the fourth time I've had the opportunity to debate this bill.

In accordance with the rules of the Legislature, I need to correct my record as it pertains to the last time I debated this bill. You see, I specifically stated, "I have to tell you since my wife, Dianne—and my sons were old enough, Josh and Garrett, in order to play hockey, this coming fall will be the first time that I am not coaching." Actually, that fall I was asked to coach, and I need to correct my record because I ended up coaching then.

First of all I want to congratulate the tens of thousands of volunteers providing decades of volunteer time out there in the community, providing opportunities for kids, giving them the chance we were given in our earlier days by volunteering in coaching, refereeing, managing and training all these youth in the province of Ontario and, quite frankly, throughout Canada, North America and around the world.

You know, for the 99.9% of individuals who are doing a great job out there, there's that one small percentage point of individuals that needs to be addressed. I bring in a number of headlines. This one is from April 19: "Swim Coach Charged with Sexual Offences." This one is from Friday, April 13: "Junior Sports Coach Guilty of Attempted Rape of Boy." This one, April 17: "Ex-Green Forest Coach Arrested" for sexual assault. This one: "Coach Accused of Sexual Assault." The list goes on and on and on: soccer coaches, taekwondo individuals, swim coaches, basketball coaches. You just need to look at the headlines, or one only needs to look at the headlines out there, to know that there's a problem in an area that I think we're trying to address to the best of our ability.

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I should explain how this came to be in my own life. Quite frankly, it was right back when I was in grade 6. We got a new principal in the school at that time, and I recall my father saying—it was halfway through the year, and he says, "Whatever you do, I want you to stay away from that principal. No matter what, don't be caught with him. Don't be alone with him in any way, shape or form." To a grade 6, I looked up at Dad—who, I should add, was on the Durham regional police force at the time, or it could have been still the Oshawa police force. He had been, for 33 years—a great career in policing. I looked up and I said, "Well, why?" He turned—and you know, when Dad goes into cop mode, you stay right away. "Because I said so," he said. At that, I just backed off. I remember about two years later, when I was in grade 8, I asked him, "Dad, why did you tell me when I

was in grade 6, no matter what happens, to stay away from that particular individual?" He said that, quite frankly, it was because he had charged the individual with sexually molesting a 14-year-old boy at Continental Massage in downtown Oshawa at that time. There was no way to recognize or identify that particular individual or remove him from the ability to be in confinement with children at that time. The only way it could be done was by that person, my father, telling me to make sure I do whatever I could to stay away from the individual.

Mr. Speaker, when I was in grade 8, I said that that is wrong and if I ever get the chance to do something about it, I will. When I first came to this Legislature and had the privilege and honour to be elected in 1995, my first bill coming in was to deal with this particular aspect. The end result was, we ended up with the sex offender registry in the province of Ontario, which the federal government then followed up on Canada-wide.

I thought all was great and wonderful until I happened to be, quite frankly, as many do here in the Legislature, coaching hockey at the time. An individual came to me and said, "You know something? You see that referee out there? They shouldn't be on the ice with those kids."

I said, "Well, what do you mean?"

"I can't tell you, but that referee should not be out there on the ice with those kids."

"Well, why?"

"I can't tell you. I'm just telling you that that person should not be out there."

I said, "Why can't you tell me?"

"It's because of my work."

"Well, where do you work?"

"Well, I can't tell you."

So I started to do the research and found out, lo and behold—I used my contacts; you know, you have a father in a policing community. There's certainly an abundance of contacts that you can use to check these things out. I checked and, lo and behold, the referee who was on the ice had multiple sex convictions.

For those who don't know, referees have the ability, or kids have the ability at 14, to start refereeing younger kids. This convicted sex offender could be in the change room, changing with a 14-year-old at that time, and had multiple sex convictions.

I then thought I'd do the appropriate thing and went to the referees in chief. I approached them and I said, "Look, we've got a problem out there we have to address." They said, "Well, what's that?" I explained the individual and I explained the circumstances, explained my research, and they said, "Oh, we'll check into it." So the next time I happened to meet the referee in chief of the district, he turned to me and he said, "You know something? You've got something wrong here." He said, "We've done the background and read his resumé. We did the check and this person, as a matter of fact, is a police officer. What are you talking about?" I looked at him, and I looked up and I said, "Don't you realize? The only thing you checked was his resumé. He has been



convicted of impersonating a police officer as well." They went, "Oh, my God. We need to do something."

As a result of those actions, I then went to individuals, including Hockey Canada, and sat down with Hockey Canada. I'm sure everybody in the chamber knows about what happened with Sheldon Kennedy and Theo Fleury and the things that unfortunately happened to those individuals by an individual who's now serving time for his actions, and hopefully that'll be appealed to make sure the individual serves just time for the actions that have occurred for those individuals.

But I went to Hockey Canada and I said, "Look, we've got a bit of a problem." They said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Here's the situation."

I started to do some research about bringing in legislation at the time. When I met with the great staff individuals who help us all draft legislation here at Queen's Park, they asked about, "Well, rather than just hockey, what about other components or other sports throughout the province of Ontario?" I said, "You know something? That's a good idea. Let's check into it." When we checked into it, lo and behold, there were differences throughout the entire province for different sports—not only that, but different hockey leagues as well. So what we did is, we did some research. We contacted some sporting activities that never had any requirement to do background checks for anybody, whether they're coaching, managing, training or refereeing officials, in any way, shape or form.

So we drafted up a bill that essentially encompassed all amateur sport—and this is important—as to be determined by Sport Ontario. This is a funding agency that receives funds from the province of Ontario that determines what amateur sport actually is. You see, Mr. Speaker, during the bill: "What are we going to do with kids playing road hockey? That's amateur sport. No, no; we'll determine that the guidelines established by Sport Ontario will be the ones."

Any individual that comes in contact with kids at that time will have to have a background check. It's called a vulnerable person's check, a vulnerable sector check or a criminal investigation. Essentially what takes place is, the individual would then apply for a coaching position—and it happens all the time; as a matter of fact, they were short of lacrosse coaches and, quite frankly, I don't know all the rules of lacrosse but guess who's on the bench on Tuesday night because we needed some coaches? Otherwise the league was going to have a lot of trouble.

However, the background check is then—so you get approved for working or volunteering in an organization. Then you would submit your name to a policing department or, quite frankly—and this is another key component—there are agencies out there that now do this full time. I know that the former deputy chief of police for the region of Durham—his name is Rod Piukkala—now works for a company, and that's what their service does. They do background checks for individuals for work-related activities and/or sports activities.

So, for example, the league could approach them and get a reduced rate, and they will do a background check

of all your coaching staff or all those individuals involved in that in order to save costs and time.

Then, after the background check comes back, the league would review it. They normally have a review committee, and they determine whether the individual is one that should be working with kids in any way, shape or form. I mentioned sex offenders on this, but there are a lot of other aspects where there's a convicted or a multi-convicted individual for drinking and driving, impaired driving. Would you want them driving your kids to hockey games, lacrosse games, soccer or those sorts of things? Or, are there individuals out there with multiple convictions for selling drugs? Would you want somebody who's had known convictions for that working with kids?

As I stressed, there are thousands and thousands of volunteers, and 99.999% of them are all doing a great job. But it's that one small one that gives the headlines that I read earlier that kind of paint a lot with a bad brush or give concern to parents to make sure that the right individuals take part.

Now, what we're doing here is giving those opportunities and ensuring that those individuals who are working with kids—and it's not to say that this may not happen. All it does is allow the organizations due diligence to ensure that they've done everything possible regarding those individuals who have had a past in areas where they don't want them being associated with kids, so they're not being associated with kids. Those are just for the ones who have been caught, Mr. Speaker. We know that. But it works as a deterrent, and we need to start somewhere to find out what we can do for these kids.

There has been a bit of a complication in it, and what has taken place is that, apparently—well, I'll mention it anyway—sex offenders have found that they can eliminate a lot of their aspects by changing their names. So the difficulty is that those who are applying for the background checks, if they have the same birth date as a convicted sex offender, a lot of times the RCMP are requiring fingerprint checks to ensure that that individual has not changed their name. I have, subsequently, met with the RCMP, the detachment in our area, and asked them if there is legislation that we can bring forward that ensures that individuals who change their name are not exempt from having their records follow them to the new name. This will speed up the process. That's causing a lot of concern and costing time now.

Now, one of the things, in the time I have remaining, was that each of the leagues—and there was a northern Ontario hockey league, when we started on this legislation, that had been doing a great job. They had a component in there where they were allowed to maintain the record checks or background checks for these individuals for four years. What that does is, it speeds up the amount of time or increases the requirements for individuals to make sure that it's working. It was working in that league, so we made sure that that component was in here; that the leagues have the ability to determine the length of time their background check would be good

in that league and then for a follow-up one. So if it was working in one area, why change it as it relates to some of the others?

One of the other things is the cost. There has been a cost affiliated with it. It ranges, depending on where you go, if you use a service, an agency or local enforcement. It amounts to roughly about \$1 per player on the team for each individual that is working as a coach, a trainer or manager in that aspect. I know that some of the sport associations contacted us, saying, "We're going to lose volunteers, and this is going to have a huge impact on us. We may lose volunteers." I just looked at them and I said, "Is that the sort of individual that you want taking care of your kids, one who is reluctant to get that background check?"

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We want to make sure that we do everything we can to protect kids and move forward. I know in the past we've been able to receive all support in the House. Hopefully, should this bill pass again for the second reading, we'll be able to get it to committee this time so those organizations impacted will come forward.

I must say that, although the bill has not passed in the past, organizations like the Canadian Ski Patrol have adopted the policy. I was a keynote speaker at lacrosse Ontario, who are implementing that policy because they think it's the right thing to do. They just needed some guidance support and, hopefully, the House will decide it's the right thing to do.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I want to congratulate the member from Oshawa for his diligence and persistence in this regard.

Clearly, this has been before us three times, and this is the fourth effort that he makes. Our party has spoken to this bill in support, and it has never made it through hearings and never came back here for third reading, and it is unfortunate, I have to say.

While it is limited in terms of its scope, I think there is enough there to support in second reading and send it for committee hearings and allow the different people who are interested to come and give feedback to the bill because there are things that could be done that would make the bill better, quite clearly. I'm sure the member from Oshawa probably agrees.

What the bill does is to make it mandatory for amateur sports organizations that have children under the age of 18 involved to require police background checks of adults who have regular contact with children. An adult must consent to the background check. However, for the positions of referee, official trainer or coach, consenting to this criminal record check is mandatory.

One of the things that I'm sure drove the member from Oshawa to introduce this is the incredible number of horrible, heinous stories that have come forward connected to sexual abuse by coaches with the young men they have coached. That kind of sexual predation is horrible. We know that it has ruined lives of young men

and that it is difficult to get over that kind of abuse. For me, any effort that we could introduce that could prevent that sort of heinous act from happening that ruins people's lives is a good thing.

Now, whether a mandatory check or a mandatory criminal record check would get at the problem is another matter, but I believe it's one of the many things that could and should be done.

I know that Sports4Ontario makes a comment where they say that "there is no data or even anecdotal evidence to suggest that sport or any other segment of the non-profit sector (including recreation, arts, culture, etc.) is rampant with criminals," and they're probably right. I know that many organizations feel as if somehow they're being targeted with it or somehow that having a mandatory check makes them appear as if there is a great deal of criminal activity going on, and I don't think that is the case. I'm sure that's not the intent by the writing of this bill by the member from Oshawa.

But I do know that many have stated concerns, and I want to read some for the record—and it comes from the same organization. And here's a quote from one of them:

"The Sports4Ontario is in full support of developing and maintaining a safe environment for all sport participants. However, this is not a sport-only issue. Efforts should focus on helping all organizations, regardless of sector; improve screening for all vulnerable persons in accordance with Volunteer Canada's full 10-step process."

I have to admit I haven't read the full 10-step process, but I suspect they're probably good, and I suspect the member from Oshawa agrees with those steps. I don't know, but that's something to look at. I'm looking forward to this individual now that's coming forward to talk about that.

"Effective risk management requires attention to all potential remedies for any given risk. Presenting one solution but ignoring the increased risks thereby created is not acceptable in today's environment of organizational accountability. Screening is of great importance, and implementing a responsible system must be a collective process across the sectors in partnership with the government." That's Margaret Emin, chair, Sport4Ontario.

Another person says, "The Ontario Hockey Federation has been a proponent of mandatory volunteer screening since 2001 and has continued to enhance its screening process each year. Bill 30 attempts to address the issue of volunteer screening in the sport sector, although it fails to be considered even an adequate approach. The not-for-profit volunteer organization sector continues to work towards improved risk management and safety for its members; however, an approach such as the submission of Bill 30 without working with the organizations is detrimental to the overall improvement of programming for citizens of Ontario." That is Phillip McKee, executive director, Ontario Hockey Federation.

Someone else has another matter to raise: "Gymnastics Ontario has adopted Volunteer Canada's 10-step



process as a starting point for managing the risks to our organization. We also go further and have developed a comprehensive strategy for coaches, judges and volunteers. Bill 30 describes only one facet of managing risks and should not be the only thrust for a sport organization.” And that’s Holly Abraham, CEO, Gymnastics Ontario.

So a number of people clearly have some concerns, and it’s good to hear from them as we send this to committee hearings, because I think that when we debate this, we might get amendments to the bill that all of us can agree on to strengthen what the member from Oshawa is trying to do. I know that some people have issues connected to the cost. The cost of criminal record checks varies throughout the province; in some areas there is no cost and in others there may be a fee of \$25, \$35, \$50 per week. This is a number that some people throw out. They say that if there is such a cost to organizations, the government has an obligation to deal with that. So there are concerns that are stated by some, and I think that the more we talk to people, the better we create policies around here.

By the way, I should point out that my concern isn’t just around sexual predatory practices, and the member alluded to other potential problems. There could be other fraudulent activity that sports organizations would be concerned about. There could be issues connected to drug-related activity that we should be speaking about, and all of that is something that organizations are very concerned about, to be sure.

The same organization that I mentioned, Sport4Ontario, raises issues of how a criminal record check may not be sufficient in terms of getting to the problem, and they say the following: “A criminal record check from the local police detachment may only capture criminal convictions within that particular jurisdiction. If a person moves from town to town and leaves a trail of convictions, that may not be disclosed,” which is a good point.

“Bill 30 does not require a criminal record check that includes a Canadian Police Information Centre check that will capture criminal convictions across the country.

“Criminal record checks do not capture dropped charges, investigations of criminal behaviour or other areas that are captured by vulnerable sector checks.”

These are legitimate concerns, and I think sending it to committee is useful to do as a way of making this bill improved and more effective. So we support this bill on second reading and support sending it to committee for hearings, because I think we’ll get better suggestions and better ideas on how to improve the bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It’s a pleasure to rise in the House today, and it sounds like there’s going to be some level of agreement on this bill that’s before us. From the outset, let me thank the member from Oshawa for bringing forward the bill. I admire his tenacity. That usually leads to success, they tell us, so perhaps this is the time that it does get through the process.

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We, as a government, recognize the significant role in our society that amateur sports plays in our communities and in our sports organizations, athletic organizations, and I think what we’re doing as individuals or as parents is entrusting our children to those organizations. Often it’s for athletic reasons, for sports reasons, for cultural reasons, entrusting them for a few hours or a few minutes, sometimes a few days, into the care of other adults. What I think the member is trying to do is trying to ensure that there’s a process that’s in place that ensures that those adults that we’re entrusting our kids to are worthy of our own trust in the first place.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our communities, so I think we have to ensure that the process we have for volunteers is one that we all agree with.

I think the member has made some good points about his own personal exposure to this type of issue and some of the issues that he’s been involved with in minor sports, but as a previous speaker has noted, there are some concerns.

Let me state from the outset that I will be supporting the bill, and I believe other members on this side of the House will be supporting the bill, because we want to see it go to committee, because we have heard from others, obviously, and there’s some parts of the bill that we think could be improved upon. I think the member from Trinity-Spadina suggested a few of those, and I have a few that are here before me now.

Depending on the type of check obtained, for example, convictions that have happened in other jurisdictions do not always appear on the search in this type of check. There’s also something called a vulnerable sector check which provides additional details, and perhaps that should be included. That’s something that may not appear on a standard criminal check.

What we also would like to see happen is that all sports be required to accept this process. We know we’ve had some that have come forward on a voluntary basis, but there appears to be agreement around the House today that this should be mandatory, that this isn’t something that should be optional, that there should be a process in place.

We also hear—I think all of us have heard in our communities—that a lot of these organizations, on an annual basis, are facing financial pressures. So we have to implement the system, whatever system is agreed upon at the end of the day, in a way that doesn’t impose a financial burden on either the individual who’s trying to volunteer or on the organizations themselves. We really want to retain the ability to attract volunteers and to ensure that people feel safe when they come forward, that they’re not going to have to go through an onerous process, but there should be an understanding that they do have to go through a fair process.

We also have to specify the offences. We’ve heard of some of the offences that have been brought forward. I think a more fulsome discussion of what type of offences should be included that should prevent somebody from becoming a referee, a coach or trainer, or an adviser.

We also need to establish clear and reasonable rules around this, so that there's an expectation that is placed upon the individual organizations and upon the individuals themselves, so that they understand the process they'll be submitting themselves to.

There are also provisions under Bill 24 that's before us that would permit the inspection of third party premises. That's something that I think goes beyond the realm of what is in the bill and needs to be expanded on. I'm not opposed to the idea, but I just think we need to be careful and we need to be specific about it.

I like private members' time, Speaker, because often it allows us to do what we're doing right here: for a member to stand up and to bring forward what I think is a very good idea. It allows others from the House to agree with the member, to say this is a great idea, but also to bring suggestions forward and to allow the bill to move forward. I think that what happens at private members' time is that the strings that often orchestrate government aren't being pulled. I think what's happening is that we're here, either members of the opposition, members of the third party, members of the government, debating what we believe is in the best interests of our community and kids. This, I think, is a perfect example. There are some examples out there that are currently taking place that I think would be the opposite of this, where our kids aren't being put first.

In this case, I think the individual, who belongs to a different party than I do and probably has a different political philosophy, is putting forward an idea that is in the best interests of the kids in my riding as well. I will agree with him on this. I want to work with him to ensure that this moves forward, that other people are heard from, that the committee process is one that includes everybody. I wish the member success and would hope that this would eventually receive royal assent some day.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member from Wellington—Halton Hills—sorry, you were standing. The member from Elgin—Middlesex—London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker. I guess the other member is just heading out for a minute.

I'd like to first of all thank the member from Oshawa for bringing forward this bill. He's been a strong advocate for youth and his constituents, and he has been a pretty strong mentor for all our new MPPs here.

This is a very important issue, and recently it's come to the forefront with many publicized cases. I take, for instance, the Theo Fleury case that came up about his incidents that occurred when he was in minor sports. It's coming out as a very public matter, and the extent is very damaging. It just proves to the effect that there is abuse that is in our sports system.

But it's not just occurring in the headlines. Unfortunately, it's in places that we'd least expect it. The victims who come forward—I just can't imagine how they feel coming forward and being public about bringing out what has occurred.

That's why I think it's very important that we're here today to debate this issue. We have a duty to the citizens

of this province to open the dialogue on this issue, try to remove the stigma and protect our children. We need to foster a culture that not only protects the kids but prevents abuse and also helps people who are victims come forward.

We can continue to talk about it, but now it's time to take some action. Bill 24 is a tangible way to protect our children by mandating a criminal background check on anyone volunteering to coach a youth sport. As a father, I coach my daughter's soccer every year, and I see how kids can become vulnerable out on the field, being alone with someone, let alone the referees—and that's just in soccer. Myself, being the coach, someday I will not be there, and I would like to ensure that my daughter is safe out there on the soccer field. I think, being a volunteer coach, this is very important. This isn't an attack on the coaches who are out there now because, as you say, there are probably 98% of them out there who are true and dedicated to their sport; the same with the referees, trainers, etc. But it's that small minority out there that causes such damage to a child in later years, as we have seen in the cases that come forward.

I'll just take a minute here. This is a really effective piece of legislation, and I thank you for bringing it forward. We seem to have unanimous consent here, so hopefully we can pass it, actually get it through committee quickly and get it up here to third reading so that we can get this out and start protecting our kids.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Davenport.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'm honoured to rise here today, and I'd like to acknowledge and thank the member from Oshawa for bringing this issue forward and, as has been said, forward once again. This is the fourth time it's been brought forward. It has had the support of our party in the past and it will certainly have my support going forward to move it to committee.

As a newcomer in this House, I'm hoping that this is something we can actually get through committee, that it has the opportunity for people to weigh in, to strengthen the bill. I'd like to move it forward to make sure that it does what it's intended to do.

I'm pleased to see something that means so much to a member here, who then has the commitment to continue to bring it forward, and also to speak, whether it's to Theo Fleury and his bravery in telling his story or, unfortunately, the thousands of survivors of sexual abuse and child abuse in this province who need protection, obviously.

As has been mentioned by my colleague from Trinity—Spadina and others here in the House today, there are some concerns, I think, about the fees associated with police background checks. I think that's something that should be looked at closely in committee. I have some concerns overall about the fact that, in this province, we seem to be stepping away from providing social services in a way that's publicly funded, that's regulated, that has proper oversight. Instead, we're relying more and more on the volunteer sector, on the charitable sector, to fill in that role.



As that begins to happen—I think volunteerism has a huge value in this province, but volunteers are people who are trying to build their resumé's, often, and advance their careers, and that's important. They're young people, often, who are trying to get a first job. They're often low-income people who are on Ontario Works or ODSP. I think that for all of those folks, we need to make sure that money is not a barrier to their enthusiasm and passion for their community, to volunteer. We need to make sure that this bill does ensure that volunteerism is not an obstacle for anybody here, and that's something that I would want to look into in committee.

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Again, I want to thank the member from Oshawa and express my support for this bill and to move it forward as soon as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** I too would like to join in with the other members participating in this debate and congratulating the member from Oshawa for bringing this forward, a colleague member of mine in the great region of Durham, where there are just so many wonderful amateur sports taking place. I congratulate him for bringing this forward.

Certainly as a mother who has volunteered in amateur sporting areas and other areas, but also as a parliamentary assistant for children and youth services in Ontario, I'm very supportive of this bill. There are some concerns and opportunities that I share with members opposite, of the third party, that I think can be addressed in committee, but I too am hopeful that this bill can go forward.

The intention of the bill, as I understand it, if passed, will require any organizer of an amateur sports program to obtain a criminal record check of persons who are a referee, other official, trainer, coach or any other position which involves dealing with persons under 18 years of age on a regular basis.

I want to talk a bit about children's safety, which I believe is paramount to this bill. We certainly have a responsibility to do everything we can to protect society's most vulnerable from the harm of sexual abuse and assault and from other things like bullying, as we proposed in Bill 13. The protection and safety of Ontario's children and youth is one of our government's priorities.

I'm very proud to be the first jurisdiction in Canada to establish a sex offender registry. Ontario's registry has proven to be very effective. Our rate of compliance is over 97%. This is one of the highest compliance rates of all sex offender registries in operation, including registries in the United States.

We provide support to child victims of sexual abuse. Victim witness assistance programs provide services to child victims and witnesses by offering emotional support, preparing them for court and referring them to counselling and other services. We are expanding the innovative child victim witness program to eight centres, serving their regions across the province, and we're

providing community grants for projects focused on child victims of sexual abuse.

We've allocated \$15.4 million to the provincial strategy to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation on the Internet, which was created in 2006. This initiative brings together police from across the province to develop an all-encompassing approach to preventing child abuse and exploitation.

Since 2004, we have invested \$5.2 million to the safer and vital communities grant, a program which helps community-based non-profit organizations to establish local crime prevention programs and initiatives which, amongst other things, target children and youth.

As someone who has volunteered quite a bit in Pickering–Scarborough East, the great community I represent, which is part of Durham region as well, I am supportive of this bill. I think we do need to listen to the feedback that has been received about this bill regarding screening, because we know that, depending on the type of check obtained, convictions in other jurisdictions may not be presented. There are other checks, such as a vulnerable sector check, which I believe my colleague from Oakville spoke to. So I think we do need to address those things in committee, and we do need to have some conversations about these concerns that are coming forward about the cost of undertaking criminal record checks of each employee and volunteer, what kind of burden that places upon not just the organization but the volunteers themselves.

I don't think people have a problem going through that process or even spending some money on this, but we have to look at what's reasonable. When I look at the world of volunteers, we have people who volunteer day in and day out, and we have some volunteers who volunteer once a month, a couple of times a year. We certainly don't want to have implications that affect the ability of sports to retain and attract those volunteers.

So, if this bill moves forward to committee, and I'm hopeful that it will, I suggest that we look at ways of minimizing that financial administrative burden to the volunteers and the organizations that they support.

It's also important to note that the bill does not specify which offences, if any, will prevent an individual from becoming a referee, coach or trainer, and the bill does not establish clear and reasonable rules governing how criminal record information is collected, used, assessed and maintained by amateur sporting organizations. Provisions under Bill 24 that permit the inspection of third party premises where agency records are believed to be stored may well go too far, possibly giving rise to a charter violation.

These are just some of the things I think we need to consider and look at when this goes to committee. I sense a great deal of support from all parties in the House, and I am very pleased and honoured to provide my personal support to my colleague the member from Oshawa.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's great to rise to support the member from Oshawa for this bill. I have the privilege of

being involved, having three young children with my wife, Margie, in minor sports for the past 30 years, having coached and been involved in the executive for 15 years each of minor hockey and minor soccer.

I know one of the biggest problems we have is around getting volunteers. I know that we hear the stories, and there's many more stories locally we don't see in the paper about problems that come up. We need to devise a system that will make it easy on our volunteers to do the checks, as much financially as it is organizationally.

I know that some of our soccer programs in our area—they're a very small group. Four or five people and volunteers are in charge of getting coaches for 600 children. In one organization being involved with that, you spend hours looking for people. You want to be careful that we can somehow maybe provide a list that could be checked against the database so it wouldn't time-out our volunteers. A neighbouring soccer group with about the same number of children folded just because of volunteer hours; it couldn't get the volunteers it needed.

Our volunteers are generally coaches and assistant coaches. They're generally people who will coach for one or two years at a time. These are not professional coaches. In many cases, especially with the youngest children, volunteers haven't even played the sport. It's more about just changing them and getting them on the field.

We've really relied on the volunteer hours in the high schools. I think that was brought in under the former government. That really helped save our program.

So when you look at a group of people on a shoestring and trying to just get enough hours between them to run an association, you want to make sure that we don't do something that will end up just giving our children less places to actually get out and play sports, whether it be dancing—it can be even with seniors. We have a lot of vulnerable people here. But we want something, a system that actually does what it's intended to do and weeds out the people we don't want involved, but also does it in a way that's quite easy to look after.

I think that as we go through the committee stage, we should be able to find something that solves those and meets both those requirements. I think the timeframes are right. If we're handing a simple list of our people to the local police station, having them review it would make it a lot easier. Sometimes, they know a lot about the local people, and it can simply be a yes or a no and leave it at that. But it gives the protection we need, because too often we see these stories a year after about how people's lives have been affected.

But on the positive side, we also see with these young children some of the great stories of being involved. Even in our area we have a couple of people I was able to coach—Michael Robertson, who was the University of Ottawa athlete of the year this year, and Christina Julien from our area, who's on the Canada Olympic soccer team. They got their starts through these minor sports, and they've gone on to be great students throughout

school, and they're great mentors today coming back to the area. So we need to promote this in every way we can.

I'm glad to have the opportunity to talk to this bill, and I look forward to bringing it through, because it's a bill, I understand, that the member from Oshawa has tried before. For many good reasons, he has brought it back, and I really want to see it succeed this time and really do what it's intended to do so we end up with a strong system for our kids to participate in, and even our seniors, and to make sure that all our volunteer groups are protected.

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**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure, actually, to rise to speak in support of Bill 24. I know it's been a long time coming for my colleague from Oshawa, and I congratulate him for bringing this bill forward.

I think there are probably few MPPs in our caucus, perhaps even the entire House, who have been as involved in community sports and children's programs as my colleague, so you know that this legislation is coming from his heart.

I also appreciate the encouraging comments received from my colleagues from the government side, as well as from the third party opposition.

I, myself, have been proudly involved in community sports for many years. As a youth, I played on many different baseball and hockey teams, and I even coached Chatham Minor Baseball, house league and travel league; sponsored girls' minor soccer; I was also a coach with Chatham Minor Hockey Association at the peewee level; and I coached and played on several men's slo-pitch teams, as well as even umpired at various levels in the youth and adult sports, and enjoyed that very much. As a result, Mr. Speaker, I truly know the value of getting active at a young age and how these organizations can, in fact, bring families and friends together.

Yet we live in a world with far more access to information than we used to. That brings the benefit of a heightened awareness but also terrifying stories of abuses of power by adults in charge.

As part of the Ontario PC caucus, I ran in the recent campaign on a platform that included getting serious about catching dangerous predators and ensuring community safety. Did you know, Speaker, that there are over 14,000 names on Ontario's sex offender registry? We sought to strengthen that registry by giving police the tools they needed to apprehend dangerous predators. Our position was supported by organizations such as the Canadian Crime Victims Foundation.

The well-being of our children has been at the front of the public consciousness in recent years. From the horrifying details of disgraced hockey coach Graham James and his high-profile victims in Theo Fleury and Sheldon Kennedy to the charges recently brought against Jerry Sandusky at Penn State University, where there may have been up to 10 young victims, there has not



been a more appropriate moment to respond to public concerns.

We need to be more proactive when it comes to individuals, both male and female, who are put in a position of authority over our kids. I believe that my colleague's bill closes a significant loophole and, more importantly, offers parents better peace of mind, ensuring that more safeguards have been put in place.

As a father and a grandfather and as someone with a long history of involvement in sport, I am eager to support this legislation, and I applaud my colleague for bringing it forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Oshawa, you have two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** No, no, I can use the remaining time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** You want to use the remaining time?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity.

I'm going to, first of all, thank the members from Trinity–Spadina, Oakville, Elgin–Middlesex–London, Davenport, Pickering–Scarborough East, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Chatham–Kent–Essex for their comments.

I want to mention a few things in regard to some of the comments regarding the member from Trinity–Spadina. The reason it was limited in scope is because there are a lot of other sectors that could be used out there, and it needs to start somewhere. We need to be able to ensure that—because if you cast the net fairly wide, it's going to be overwhelming to implement in all the volunteer sectors in the province of Ontario. I think if they capture one of the largest components, being the sporting sector, it would take on an ability to expand from that once the bugs have been worked out.

There are some specific areas that need to be worked out, very clearly. Some of the individuals I met with since the bill was introduced again were individuals who were victims of what happened at Maple Leaf Gardens. The problem is that there are no support groups for those individuals out there in the province of Ontario. We've tried to find and aid them and have been unable to find a specific program that will help these individuals, hopefully so that they'll be able to make sure that they can gain the support necessary to take them through the troubled times they've experienced and all that.

Some of the other aspects: The member from Trinity–Spadina mentioned—I'm not sure if I heard it incorrectly—about \$25 weekly. It's usually an annual fee that takes place, but the organization in the bill is designed so you can do it once every four years if the organization deems it fit.

The other thing is—and this would be for those individuals watching: Order multiple copies when you get it done. Like myself, volunteering in lacrosse and hockey this particular year and coming years, I would order two copies at one time. The cost is still the same;

you don't pay twice the cost. That way, I can submit them to both leagues in order to reduce the cost.

What organizations like Oshawa Minor Hockey have done is gone with organizations, and there are a number of them out there now, that provide the service at a reduced cost. I know my colleague sitting beside me was concerned about the cost. What they do is submit all the individuals from the league. The league covered the cost to the organization, and it was through the former deputy chief of police, who's now working in this sector. All the individuals—and there's 36 teams in Oshawa Minor, approximately five individuals per team that go out there, plus on-ice individuals. They were covering the entire cost, and it was substantially reduced to the local ones.

I should mention that the OPP at one time—this is what was expressed to me—offered to do it for free. However, some of the local police departments were very concerned because it happens to be that if you have 1,000 volunteers at \$25 a pop, it adds up to a substantial amount of revenue for them, and they were reluctant to lose that revenue for the departments in the costs there.

I think what I'm hearing, though, is great. The other aspect is the 10-step program that the member from Trinity–Spadina mentioned. Number 7 of the 10-step program specifically requires what we're asking for here.

The only thing I say in closing is: Is there any chance that we shouldn't be taking to do the best we can to protect our kids?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We'll vote on this particular item later on in business.

## NEW DRIVERS' INSURANCE RATE REDUCTION ACT, 2012

### LOI DE 2012 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE POUR LES NOUVEAUX CONDUCTEURS

Mr. Sergio moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to amend the Insurance Act to provide for lower insurance rates for new drivers / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances afin de prévoir des taux d'assurance-automobile moins élevés pour les nouveaux conducteurs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I'm pleased to initiate the debate on Bill 71. It's a bill that aims to bring changes to the auto insurance system. It will improve accessibility, increase affordability and promote fairness within a regulated and competitive system.

If passed, Bill 71 will lower insurance premiums by crediting new drivers with additional years of driving experience. New drivers would be eligible if they complete a ministry-approved driver education course and would be discredited if they committed offences as at fault in an accident or have not paid fines related to an

accident. This legislation would essentially offer new drivers a clean driving record and the opportunity to pay rates comparable to those paid by other drivers with clean records. Bill 71 gives the benefit of the doubt to the first-time drivers, making auto insurance more affordable and accessible to families across our province of Ontario.

#### 1510

New drivers pay substantially more in insurance premiums than those at age 25, even if they have clean records. This makes driving a financial burden on families, students driving to school or those who are newly employed and rely on a car to get to their place of work.

First drivers need to be given a chance to prove themselves. First drivers need not to be looked on with indifference. First drivers need not to be lumped as the group causing the most accidents. Is it a sin to be young? Do we find a young person guilty before he or she had his or her day in court? Why do we want to penalize and discriminate against our first drivers? Is this how we want to encourage and give our young people a bit of a lift, with less stress and less weight on their shoulders?

Let us not disregard the needs of first drivers, especially a young first driver. Seeking that first job, buying that first car, prohibitive insurance rates may prohibit the first driver to acquire that first car and seek that very first job.

Some would say that by lowering insurance rates for new drivers, someone else will have to pay or pick up the difference. If this is the thinking mode, are we then perpetrating the injustice of penalizing our young drivers by subsidizing the rates of older or more experienced drivers?

Often, getting that first car or even just being a first driver can be a real burden not only for the new driver but on his or her parents in the case of a young driver. Often, parents have to make extreme sacrifices to help pay, first, for a car and, second, to help pay for insurance in order to ease the entry of their son or daughter into the workforce.

I'm pleased to say that this bill is supported by the insurance bureau of Ontario. Speaker, I would like to give you, just for the information not only of the House and the members in the House but for the public as well, some of the rates as they are being applied today in our market.

I'm just choosing a middle-of-the-road insurance company out of 10, if you will, that operate in the province of Ontario. It's not the lowest, it's not the highest, but just to indicate to you, Speaker, to the House and to the people out there how they differentiate, how the cost varies. Just to give you an example of a 23-year-old on a 2012 Volks, one of our own cars here—I'm choosing the Dominion Insurance Co. of Canada.

Starting at six stars, six years' experience in Toronto—quoting Toronto now—the amount will be \$4,803. If it were to be a three-star, three-year, it would be \$11,777. That is a \$6,900 difference.

If this were to be in Ottawa, still the same 23-year-old, the same car, the same insurance company, it would be a

six-star, \$3,600; a three-star, \$8,304, for a difference of \$5,100.

If this were to be in the wonderful region of Durham, just east from us here, a 23-year-old, same car, same address, six stars, would be paying—it's a bit less, by the way. I don't know why, but it would be \$3,201 in Durham. But if you were a three-star, then you would be paying \$8,029, for a difference of \$4,800. Why is that, Speaker? I'm asking you: Which young man graduating from college or fresh from university can afford to purchase a car, can afford these rates? It's impossible.

Is this how we want to treat our young drivers? I have to tell you that I know a lot of young drivers, and they would put to shame some of the older drivers.

This is over 18 or 19 or 20—17-year-olds are not allowed; they do not qualify to come under the same circumstances or to acquire a six-star rating, if you will.

This would be a different story if we were to look at a 17-year-old who wants to drive, purchase a first car, under the parents' insurance, but on their own this is what they would be paying with the same company: a 17-year-old, three stars—unbelievable—\$13,493. This is in Toronto. In our capital city of Ottawa, Dominion of Canada, the same car, same address, the Ottawa area, three stars, \$8,700 for a 17-year-old. And then, of course, in Durham, Dominion of Canada, same insurance, 17 years old, three stars, \$8,700.

I think this is sending a message to us as legislators that it's time that we look at the possibility of allowing our young drivers, if you will, new drivers—and they don't have to be young; they can be 25, 26, 28, getting their licence for the first time and getting into a car for the first time.

The thing that we should take into consideration is this: When insurance companies want to increase their rates, where do they go? They come to us, to the branch of the government, to FSCO, and most of the time, you tell me—let's tell our people out there, let's tell the parents, let's tell our young people—what do we say? "What do you want: 3%, 4%, 5%?" Hardly ever, we say no.

Where do our people go for help, Speaker? Where do they go, our young people, the parents or grandparents? In most cases, grandparents pitch in to help the grandson or granddaughter. They have nowhere to go; they have absolutely nowhere to go.

So this is a chance for us here today to say, "You know what? Let's move this bill a bit forward and let's take a look at it." Let's talk to the people who really will be touched by this, and I think all Ontarians would be affected by this. Let's send it to a committee, let's do some consultations, and let's talk to the people who are interested in making submissions, that have an interest. Let's make it even better. Let's give them an opportunity to say yes or no. I have spoken to a number of agents, and they would love to see it coming, but the fact is that unless we make a move and we take that opportunity, it will never happen.

So today I present the bill to the House in the hope that it gains support by all sides of the House and we can



present something to our people, because young drivers, new drivers, are no different in Toronto than if they are in Ottawa or Durham or if they are in the north, south-east, southwest. They are new drivers. Up until now, I think they've been getting really a bum rap, I should say. Why attach to our young drivers—I don't want to say "young people" alone; young drivers, new drivers—this stigma? Why should we do that because they just happen to be first-time or young drivers? I think we should give them the opportunity to prove themselves, that indeed they can be good drivers, that indeed they deserve to have the same chance that we give other drivers. If we can do that, I think we will have accomplished something wonderful that is going to be helping young drivers, parents and grandparents. And, you know what? I tend to say that this would be a bit of a boon for our car-selling businesses or car rental businesses.

I'll give you an example of my own grandson. He graduated from college, but he couldn't afford the insurance rates, so he had to wait two years before he would seriously look at getting a car and getting insurance. We wouldn't even be thinking of sending our sons or daughters, grandsons or granddaughters to buy a car without insurance, to drive without insurance. I think it would help him mentally to send a message out there and say, "We can afford it. It's reasonable. Why wait two or three years to buy a car?" And it doesn't have to be a new car. Most of the time, young drivers—or parents that buy a car for their children or family members—tend to go to a resale. So I think there is an economic side to it as well, but the intent is the same; it doesn't matter. That would be an added benefit, if you will.

1520

For now, for today, let me say that the people I have spoken to, they say, "We can't wait to have something like this." So I would say, let's look at the possibility to do something about it. Let's move the bill ahead of the House and let's bring it back later on, even better, and do something right and good for the people, for the young people and the parents of Ontario. I thank you, Speaker, for your time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm glad to rise to comment on the bill proposed by the member from York West.

I'm kind of confused. He has brought this bill out, saying that he's going to give a discount of three years to new drivers. That already exists. They already do, if they do their course, start out with the three-year experience given to them in order to lower their rates.

By doing this, giving them another three years, it's automatically equating them to a driver who has six-years-plus experience, 30 years, 50 years, and not really taking into account that these are new drivers. These are drivers out there who probably are causing more claims, because usually if you're younger, you might be a little more reckless, driving a little faster—inexperience. Therefore, they're more of a risk; therefore, they cost more. It doesn't affect the claim costs.

What we need to do, if we're going to look at reforming insurance—and I've talked to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, I've talked to insurance brokers of Ontario and I've talked to constituents who pay premiums. If we can lower claims costs, then premiums will go down. The best way to address this is going after fraud, which is something this government tends to be putting on the back burner. Fraud accounts for close to \$1.3 billion, and that's the cost that has been attributed to the insurance industry for the past 10, 15 years. It has been there; it has just been ignored. If we can attack fraud and we can actually start putting the fraudsters in jail and getting rid of the clinics and the fake accidents that are out there, then we could actually start to get premiums lower.

This bill is going to, I guess, in a sense cause a subsidy. If rates are caused to be lower in one section of an insurance agency and the claim costs stay the same, then, therefore, the rates in the other parts of industry will rise.

I'll give you an example: State Farm. State Farm probably has one of the lowest insurance rate premiums for new young drivers. And they do so, as they have; that's their market. They're going after the low cost, and this is their low fruit that they're going to get businesses, in hopes that as the drivers age, they stay with them. But at the other end of the spectrum, State Farm has the higher rates, on average, for any experienced driver, and they do that because they have to subsidize the lower rates they're putting out there.

This bill is basically asking the government to tell the industry to give the rates to the new drivers, the new experience, and subsidize their low rates, and then for every one of us in this chamber, unless you just learned how to drive, rates are going to rise, because that's how the industry is operating. That's how it works.

I question equating taking a course to driving experience. They're two separate things. There are many people out there who are book smart, who can just read and go, but the technique of doing any task takes time to learn and do better, so you're more at risk for higher claims.

Speaker, I applaud him on trying to lower insurance rates, and if this bill does pass and go to committee, I will have plenty of amendments to fix this bill. But as it stands, all we're doing is subsidizing another part of the marketplace. You're causing everyday taxpayers who have been driving for six-plus years to subsidize the lower rates. I don't think our seniors can afford to do that, considering the expenses they have with their energy costs, the cost of groceries, the cost of gasoline.

So let's not raise the rates. Let's work at getting the claims cost down. Let's attack fraud. Let's work together.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I'll begin with this: Bill 71 is a bill which will address the issue that new drivers are often hit with the very difficult task of affording insurance. It's very difficult because their insurance rates are very high, and this bill will in some measure decrease that amount. I acknowledge that and I recognize that.

I have a lot of young people whom I worked with before I was in politics and a lot of young people whom I work with now, in my campaign and in the community, and I think this is a good idea. I will support anything that helps to make driving more accessible and more fair, so I want to get that out of the way, first and foremost. Crediting new drivers with some additional experience if they fulfill certain criteria is a step at making insurance rates more affordable for new drivers, and I acknowledge that.

What I want to turn to and address, though, is the fact that, though this is a good measure, there are a number of other concerns in the auto insurance industry. What I'm particularly concerned about is the fact that, initially, my colleague the member opposite, the member from the government—

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** York West.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much—the member from York West. The member from York West noticed me looking for his name.

The member from York West initially presented a bill which struck to the heart of a very serious issue that's affecting a lot of drivers in this region, particularly in the greater Toronto area. That bill, Bill 43, was to address neighbourhood discrimination.

What I'm concerned about is the fact that that bill was initially slotted for debate today. That is a very serious issue. That was an issue that was number one in my riding and number one in a number of ridings across the GTA. It was an issue that affected people directly in their pocketbooks. Driving is a necessity, particularly in suburban communities where there is no accessible transportation, where there is no public transit that would be efficient to get them to their jobs, to their schools. Driving is a necessity in those areas, and auto insurance is something that people have to deal with, and there is clear discrimination going on based on where you live.

It troubles me that the member from York West is not debating that bill today. Perhaps due to pressure from the insurance companies, perhaps due to pressure from lobbyists or from those who are interested in maintaining the rates and maintaining the system the way it is, he is not debating that bill today. But I will make this commitment: I will not retract my bill. Bill 45 will continue. I will fight neighbourhood discrimination. I will fight against this because it's the right thing to do. It does not matter how many lobbyists, it doesn't matter how many insurance companies approach me and tell me not to bring this bill forward; I will not stop and I will not retract this bill. The reason is, people are in dire circumstances. People are very hard up. Times are very difficult. This is a bill that will bring some fairness to the auto insurance industry.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you some examples of what's going on in and across the GTA. We took an example; we did some research on this issue. The researchers in our caucus took a driver, and the example was someone who is 40 years old, married, who had been driving since 1990—so a very experienced driver—driving a very modest car, a 2009 Toyota Yaris, driving it

10 kilometres a day for leisure, with snow tires, and it was kept in a carport—in a garage—and asked for a reasonable insurance policy.

For this individual residing in Lawrence Park, the quote that he received was \$1,153. For the very same driver—all the same criteria, all the same driving experience—if he resided at Jane and Weston, he was paying 2.5 times more, more than double the rates: \$2,517, just for living in a different community. That's simply unfair. That's something that is unacceptable.

Jane and Finch, they were paying the same rate—\$2,515; Rexdale, again, double—\$2,172; in Bramalea, not nearly as much as Jane and Weston, Jane and Finch or Rexdale, but still just under double—\$1,839. Again, Mr. Speaker, why are people being discriminated against simply based on where they live, not how they drive?

1530

In fact, what is interesting to note is that the provincial average in terms of claims is 9%. So in a particular community, only 9% of the members of that community make a claim, as a provincial average. Some communities are higher, and obviously, some communities are lower. Now, in Brampton, one of these examples, the rate is somewhat higher. It's 15%. That's 6% higher. Again, that means that 85% of people in Brampton are not making a claim. That means that 85% of people are being discriminated against based on where they live and not on whether they are making a claim, not based on their driving record, not on their risk factors; simply their postal code.

That's something that's simply wrong. We can't accept that. We should not accept that. That's why I'm bringing Bill 45, and that's why I will not retract that bill. We will debate that bill in this House. I ask every member in the House to support that bill, because it will increase fairness across the province, it will increase fairness in the GTA and it will ensure that other communities across Ontario are not negatively impacted. Rural communities will not be negatively impacted, nor will communities outside the GTA.

Now, the overarching principle here, the overarching idea, is that we need more fairness in the auto insurance industry. The reason I make this argument and the reason we need to address the fact that fairness is lacking in the industry—let's look at some of the recent amendments that have happened. Let's look at the history of what is going on in the auto insurance industry.

In the past six years we've seen approximately a 20% increase in our rates. Just last year, a regulation came into effect that slashed the benefits drivers receive. The regulations that were passed cut our benefits from \$100,000 to \$50,000, cut ancillary services that were once \$76,000 to \$36,000 and change, and created a third category, \$3,500. It's no surprise that the majority of people were now funnelled into the \$3,500 category.

What has this resulted in? It's resulted in some record profits for insurance companies. I'm quoting here from the FSCO superintendent's report on insurance. It states that if you look at Canadian underwriting income and we compare 2010 to 2011, and we compare a company—for



example, Intact—in 2010, the company made \$193 million, and in 2011, after the regulations came into effect that slashed our benefits and slashed consumer services in terms of the benefits consumers received—slashed those—the profit went up to \$273 million. That's a 42% increase. Economical saw a 167% increase. These insurance companies are benefitting. That's full-year results. If you look at fourth-quarter results only, we're seeing a 400% increase in terms of profits, a 300% increase in other companies; substantial increases in terms of profits, but where are the savings for consumers?

Now, my colleague from the opposition talks about insurance fraud and how insurance fraud is the solution to the problem. Mr. Speaker, insurance fraud, based on the Auditor General's report, accounts for 10% to 15% of the cost incurred by insurance companies. It does not contribute 90% or 95% or 85% of the costs; it's only 10%. If our rates are increasing at 20% over six years, then fraud is a marginal portion of that increase. What I'm saying is that fraud is not the majority cause of the increase in our insurance rates.

We need to acknowledge this and not focus on fraud as the be-all and end-all. We need to strike to the heart of the matter: that there is not fairness in the auto insurance regime, that there is discrimination based on neighbourhoods and that insurance rates are too high. One of the factors that the Auditor General cited or spoke to in terms of why there is this increase is that there is a legislated protection that guarantees a return on equity of 12% per year for insurance companies. Now that's a specific reason why insurance rates go up. There are many other factors involved, but let's be clear that insurance fraud is something we should address. Insurance fraud is certainly a problem, but it is not the major component of why insurance rates are increasing. Contrary to the insurance company claims, the Auditor General has made it very clear that it is not the main reason why our rates are going up. It's simply not.

It's another example, when we talk about fraud or fraud legislation—what it does is, it gives another tool to the insurance companies to make more money. It doesn't give a tool to citizens, consumers and the people of Ontario to ensure their rates will go down. If we address fraud, that's great: Address it. But where is the guarantee that, if we address fraud, insurance companies will actually lower rates for drivers? Where is that guarantee? If we give insurance companies more tools to make more money without providing any strings attached to say, "Listen, if you make more money, if you increase your profits, you have to present a savings to the people of Ontario, to the consumers." There has to be that translation.

In fact, the regulations that were passed in 2010 that came into force last year—the purpose was ostensibly to create a savings for drivers. We haven't seen the savings; we simply have not seen the savings. We've seen profits go up and rates go up as well.

So I ask you: Let's change the discourse when it comes to auto insurance. Let's ensure that our priorities

are putting people first, putting their rates lower, making rates more fair and getting rid of geographic discrimination. That would be a step in the right direction and a step in the direction for the people of Ontario. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. David Oraziotti:** I'm pleased to join the debate today on Bill 71. First of all, I want to say congratulations to the member from York West, who has introduced a very informative, thoughtful bill that is proposing benefits to all young drivers across this province that would be a tremendously cost-saving measure for younger drivers in this province. We think it's important to give them the benefit of the doubt.

I want to take you through a couple of key aspects of this bill and then make some comments in response to some of the comments that have been made today.

First of all, the member from York West, as members of this Legislature know, has been in public service for over 30 years and has been involved as an MPP for 16 years. He has led numerous initiatives around seniors' rights. The York University support that he has provided with respect to the subway and the campus there has been incredibly important. So I want to congratulate him today on bringing forward a very thoughtful bill.

Let's get to the key elements of that bill. First of all, the bill calls for a reduction in rates for driving premiums for younger drivers by giving younger drivers a credit of six years if the driver has (1) completed a ministry-approved driver education course at a driving school that is licensed under the Highway Traffic Act; or (2) has completed a driver education course at a licensed driving school in North America that is substantially similar to a ministry-approved driver education course.

The driver would not qualify for the reductions in rates if they were found to be more than 25% at fault in a claim arising from a motor vehicle accident or had his or her licence suspended for non-payment of a fine relating to the use of a motor vehicle. As well, it's important to point out the new driver would not be disqualified from getting the new rate if it was the result of a non-payment that is solely related to parking of a motor vehicle—in other words, a minor parking offence.

This is incredibly important. You heard the MPP from York West talk about the rates, and compare and contrast the various rates across the province. The average reduction for younger drivers would be approximately 30%. This is not negatively impacting other drivers across the province. This is something that the insurance association of Ontario is supportive of. This is not an issue that is controversial in the insurance industry; this is not an issue that the insurance companies are saying, "Well, look: If you attempt to do this, we're going to raise rates on older drivers." That's not what this is about.

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The insurance association of Ontario have clearly indicated that they endorse this measure that would help to reduce drivers' costs for younger drivers, according to the information that was provided earlier and read into

the record, anywhere from \$1,000 to \$8,000 per year for younger drivers. This helps Ontario families. This helps the older drivers, who probably in many cases are the parents of the younger drivers who are paying the cost of the auto insurance, but it also obviously helps directly those younger people who pay the cost of auto insurance.

Right now, these are some of the best drivers out there, and they're paying higher-than-average insurance premiums simply because they're new drivers, not because of their driving record. Drivers under the age of 25 are paying far more in premiums than drivers over that age even when they're accident-free and may have demonstrated a clean record for a number of years. The bill would give young drivers the opportunity to prove themselves as good drivers and give them a break on their premiums if it was merited.

I clearly want to lend my support to the member from York West's bill, Bill 71. I think it's a great bill. It has tremendous potential to reduce premiums. It's something, again, that's supported by the auto insurance association of Ontario. I do want to give the member, as well, credit because he's recognizing here the importance of doing something that's beneficial to all Ontarians.

In contrast, the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton spoke about Bill 45 at length and spent very little time speaking about the member from York West's bill because it's a positive bill. His bill has a tremendously negative impact on Ontarians, and I certainly, when that comes up, won't be supporting it. He's suggesting that the way to get at problems in his riding and in his area is to raise auto insurance rates on all other areas of Ontario, increase auto insurance rates on people in northern Ontario, in southwestern Ontario, in southeastern Ontario; anywhere outside the GTA, let's jack up their auto insurance rates so people in his riding can pay less. That's just wrong-headed.

What needs to happen is that we need to get at the causes of auto insurance being driven up in his area. Whether it's fraud, whether it's theft, there are other issues out there that we need to deal with. But clearly, moving forward with that bill would have a very negative impact on auto insurance rates across Ontario. In Brantford, Guelph, Kitchener, rates would go up by about 10%; in St. Catharines, they'd go up by 10%; in Sarnia, they'd go up by 25%; in Ottawa, 27%; in northern Ontario, 30%. I want to know what the member from Timmins-James Bay thinks, I want to know what the member from Kenora-Rainy River thinks when the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton wants to raise auto insurance rates on them in the northwest by nearly 40% to get rates—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the member to keep his remarks to the bill that is in front of us. A short comment is okay, but—

**Mr. David Orazietti:** Speaker, I'm certainly happy to do that. I'm just responding to the comments by the member who decided to speak about his bill, and I'll be very brief on that.

Back to the bill at hand, Speaker—and thanks for clarifying that—I wholeheartedly support Bill 71. The

member from York West has done an absolutely fantastic job in bring forward this bill to reduce auto insurance premiums for younger drivers. It's a bill that warrants support from all members of the Legislature. It's not a bill that pits one region of Ontario against another and seeks to drive auto insurance rates up in northern Ontario by 30%. I won't be supporting that. I'll be supporting the well-thought-out bill by the member from York West here.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** It's a great pleasure to stand here and speak to my colleagues in the House today on behalf of the PC caucus on Bill 71, the New Drivers' Insurance Rate Reduction Act.

Simply put, the PC caucus cannot responsibly lend our support to this bill.

Let me be clear that we cannot lend our support not because the sponsor, the member from York West, is sitting on the other side of the floor but because rejecting the bill is the sensible and right thing to do. We would love to work with the government and the third party to pass laws that would actually bring benefit to Ontarians; this one does not.

Contrary to the other members' comments, I believe Bill 71 is poorly thought out and is designed to artificially fix new drivers' insurance premiums by crediting them with three years of experience for being new drivers if they take driver education courses at ministry-approved driving schools. However, the bill does not lower the overall claims costs, and high claims costs are the root of higher insurance premiums in Ontario. You know, it doesn't take a genius to figure this out. If you lower insurance premiums for one group without lowering the overall claims costs, other groups will have to subsidize the decreases with a raise to their premiums.

Statistics show us that less-experienced drivers are more likely to file insurance claims. Bill 71 unfairly asks experienced drivers to pick up the tabs for new drivers. It seems that my colleague from the other side didn't really fully think this through before introducing it. Furthermore, I really don't believe the bill can possibly be well-researched. The bill assumes the completion of a driver education course equates to six years of actual experience on the road. Mr. Speaker, while classroom experience cannot be termed unimportant—it certainly is, and I think no amount of it isn't helpful—there's no amount of learning in a classroom that can substitute for practical experience. Speaking from my own experience living in Barrie, where we have a fair amount of snowfall in the course of a year, and coming from my experience actually racing cars, I can tell you there is absolutely no substitute for experience behind the wheel.

Currently, there isn't any way to evaluate the quality of driver education courses other than the graduated licence test. But the licence test doesn't adequately inform insurance companies how much risk they are taking when they sign a new insurance contract with a new driver. Therefore, I'd like to ask anyone to provide



this Legislature with some form of data that shows that completing a driver education course is indeed worth the full six years of experience that this bill would suggest. Until this evidence can be provided to justify this questionable assumption, I'd like to ask all my colleagues in the House not to support Bill 71.

We must oppose this bill. It's bad legislation. It's not well thought out. It's favouring one group over another at the cost of all. It's an unnecessary adjustment that adds redundant regulations to the system, and as Her Majesty's loyal opposition it's our duty, I think, to reject it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I just rushed back in from doing a couple of things in my office to speak on behalf of Bill 71, a bill that's been presented by my good friend and colleague the member from York West.

It's interesting when you look at the history of the member from York West since he's been here, since 1995, after he had what I would consider a very distinguished career as a councillor in Toronto, a member of the old Metro council. Consistently over his career in public life, he's always been a strong advocate when it comes to consumer issues: to protect the consumer, indeed to give the consumer a break. And now he's certainly devoting his energy, through Bill 71, in order to help some of our younger drivers in the province of Ontario get what I would call essentially a little better shake in life. This has particular relevance in rural Ontario, and let me spend some time from that particular perspective.

In rural Ontario, you don't have transit, you don't have a lot of other transportation alternatives, and the main vehicle for transportation is indeed the motor vehicle. The member from York West has provided a substantial background here with the wide discrepancy, I would say, for insurance costs. He talks about Toronto, Ottawa and Durham. You look at the difference of thousands of dollars in terms of providing auto insurance, which is mandatory in the province of Ontario, as it should be for some of our youngest drivers. If you look at some of the costs to be impacted on those citizens in rural Ontario, you can see that Bill 71 has a lot to offer to provide some financial relief for those youngest citizens in rural Ontario, and they would certainly welcome the approach in Bill 71.

1550

You know, Mr. Speaker, when you take the time, as you have and I have and members of this Legislature have, particularly when you talk to our 17-, 18- and 19-year-olds, they've really been at the forefront. Their generation has been at the forefront in reducing drinking and driving in the province of Ontario. As a matter of fact, when those citizens were in their high school years, they were great advocates in encouraging their peers to be more responsible, find a designated driver, find an alternative way home, phone Mom and Dad. You really get the sense that they're very in tune with road safety in the province of Ontario.

Indeed, as I said, when you look at rural Ontario, again you have our 17-, 18-, 19-year-olds—very, very experienced. They often operate farm equipment, helping out on their farms, driving tractors, combines and other equipment, and they're some of our very best and very skilled drivers. So it is really from that perspective, Mr. Speaker—I'm getting on a bit of a roll here; I'll have a drink of water.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** You should.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I thank my member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, because I recommended the same thing to him yesterday. He's reciprocating his good advice today, and I want to thank him for that.

I was really, really shocked by the divergence of prices that have been put forward, the information given to us by the member from York West. Frankly, I find that it's quite amazing when you look at some of these numbers. One of the great beauties of getting Bill 71 to committee will be the opportunity to call witnesses. In fact, this bill has been endorsed by the insurance bureau of Ontario, a very reputable organization which obviously has great insight into insurance costs in the province of Ontario. To get this bill into committee and call witnesses and call people who have insight into the pricing of insurance in the province of Ontario I think would be a great opportunity for all of us.

As it is with you, Mr. Speaker, one of the questions that we all get in our constituency offices is, how do we determine the price of insurance premiums in the province of Ontario? I think this would be an opportunity to provide some clarity and clarification in terms of the cost of determining insurance premiums in the province of Ontario.

This indeed is an excellent initiative. It's well thought out by the member from York West. This would receive a very positive review in rural Ontario as I talk to my constituents on this particular matter.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm pleased to take this opportunity to speak to Bill 71.

The member for York West seems intent on continually introducing misguided insurance legislation here in this House. First he tabled Bill 43, which seeks to handicap insurance companies' ability to determine regional risk profiles. Now he has chosen to introduce Bill 71, which is based on the same ill-advised principles of restricting the marketplace.

Time and time again, this corporate-welfare Liberal government tightens its grip on the free market, squeezing out competition, investment and, ultimately, jobs. This bill is just another example of the unfortunate process.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to spend some time talking about why insurance companies assess risk before providing insurance policies to potential clients, because I think it's important for everyone to have a clear understanding of how the market works.

When insurance companies set their rates, they first need to determine what risks are associated with provid-

ing each type of insurance, whether it's for a home, mortgage or vehicle. For example, auto insurance evaluates the risk profile of each area before providing potential clients with an insurance policy. To determine that profile, they must consider a number of different factors for each area. For auto insurance companies, this profile includes consideration of road conditions, speed limits, traffic levels and the number of accidents. The reality is, insurance companies use a number of factors to correlate rates as closely as possible with actual claims.

Of course, insurers look at the drivers with less experience behind the wheel as more likely to file a claim. But if these drivers want to fast-track that experience, insurance companies will credit them with three years of driving experience if they complete the driver's education course, and I believe that's fair.

I remember learning how to drive when I was younger. I'd drive with my father to the store, to see the big game, out in rural Ontario on the farm. We often used a lot of our vehicles before the age of 16 around the farm, and that gave me the good experience as an independent driver. So it's hard to understand how the member for York West has arrived at the conclusion that completion of a driver's education equates to six years of experience. Common sense would dictate—and "common sense" is still a term we like to use today—that there's no substitute for actual experience. I'd like to see the member for York West present an extensive study to this House that correlates drivers' education programs with six years of driving experience.

I'll leave some time for my colleague Bill Walker, of course, but the fact remains that Bill 71, just like Bill 43, fails to address real problems behind inflated premiums, and that's the high claim costs. Bill 71 in no way reduces the overall cost level in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. Further debate? The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you, Mr. Harris, my esteemed colleague, for allowing me some time, because I share a lot of your thoughts, I believe. Part of that is because our other esteemed colleague, Jeff Yurek from Elgin-Middlesex-London, has reviewed this very carefully and with due diligence. His role is to be critical and to ensure that we're putting good legislation in place so that we are giving the best value to the people of Ontario.

His concern is that this bill does not address the real issue, and that is fraud. Our stats show us that 9% of the driving public are young drivers, yet they also represent 25% of road fatalities. Similar to Mr. Harris, who grew up in rural Ontario and had to learn how to drive, you have to earn these things. You have to have experience. Sitting in a classroom taking a course does not give you the practical, valued experience.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Well, certainly, Jim, and I share that, because it is hazardous to drive down here. It's probably why they need the Scarborough subway to go in, so that will take some more cars off the road—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would remind the member to refer to members by their riding, not their names.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Sorry, Speaker.

I get back to saying that what we need to be doing is ensuring that we look at the real thing, the fraud, those phony claims, those things that are happening that take valuable dollars out of our pockets. This bill, in its current form, does absolutely nothing to address this. It takes money from one pocket and puts it into another pocket with no real significant change—kind of a Liberal trait.

I cannot support it in its current form. Significant amendments are needed.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. The member from York West, you have two minutes for reply.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I have to say that I'm truly blessed to have such a wonderful variety of members joining the debate on Bill 71: Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, thank you very much; Conestoga; Barrie; Chatham-Kent; of course, my wonderful seatmate here from Peterborough; Sault Ste. Marie joined us as well here; and Bramalea-Gore-Malton.

Recognizing the comment from our colleague on the PC side, let me say, Speaker, the bill intends exactly what they are trying not to accomplish by not supporting the bill, I have to say—that it's okay for young drivers to subsidize the other drivers, but it's not okay for all the other drivers to give these young drivers the opportunity, to give them a bit of a handout when they start their new life, coming out of college or university or seeking their new job. I have to say that I know a lot of young people who drive much better than experienced people. I drive a lot. I'm on the road a lot, and you would be amazed what you see on the road.

To my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton there, your bill, with all due respect, has all the good elements. I look forward to debating it. I look forward to seeing it when it gets to the House. I'm going to say to the House now that I will be supporting that particular bill and I've received some comments with respect to Bill 43, and it's because of the similarity, but today this is what's here. This is for the young people. I hope that we have the support of the House and send this to a committee soon.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. We'll vote on this item at the end of regular business.

1600

ALZHEIMER ADVISORY  
COUNCIL ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 CRÉANT  
LE CONSEIL CONSULTATIF  
DE LA MALADIE D'ALZHEIMER

Mrs. Cansfield moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 48, An Act to establish the Alzheimer Advisory Council and develop a strategy for the research, treatment



and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia / *Projet de loi 48, Loi créant le Conseil consultatif de la maladie d'Alzheimer et élaborant une stratégie de traitement et de prévention de la maladie d'Alzheimer et d'autres formes de démence et de recherche en la matière.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'd like to take an opportunity first to introduce some guests and say thank you very much for joining us today: David Harvey, Jacque Micallef, Karin McNair, Marija Padjen, Rosanne Meandro, Audra Rusinas, Phil Caffery and Rami Zeidan. Thank you for coming.

I'd also like to say a very special thank you to my co-sponsors, the member from Whitby-Oshawa and the member from Parkdale-High Park, both of whom have been absolutely phenomenal in their support, and I'm very appreciative.

I also want to thank the thousands of supporters who have written, who have sent messages, who have signed petitions for their support throughout this journey we've taken with this bill.

Finally, I'd like to say a special thanks to my legislative assistant Katherine Preiss for her outstanding research work that every member received, that spoke to the issue of Alzheimer's as it relates to their particular riding through their LHIN. Katie did just an incredible job.

What I'd like to share with you first of all are just some facts, and then I'd like to speak a little bit more on the personal side. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia in Canada; one in 10 seniors in Ontario has Alzheimer's disease. Currently, there are two million seniors in Ontario, so that means 200,000 individuals have Alzheimer's and related dementia disease.

In four years, by 2016, the incidence of Alzheimer's and related dementia in seniors will rise by 12%; by 2020, it will rise by 24%; and by 2025, we will have over 300,000 seniors diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. That leaves a significant number who will not be diagnosed for one reason or another. By 2030, the number of seniors with Alzheimer's disease in Ontario alone will rise by 76%. That, in itself, speaks to the need for us to address an extraordinary challenge that is facing this government, this province and all of the people who are either afflicted with this disease or have been touched by this disease through their families.

People with dementia are three times more likely to be hospitalized as compared to seniors without the disease. Currently in our hospitals, one in six—or one in four, depending on the hospital and whether it's in Canada or Ontario—are in a hospital bed at \$1,800 a day with dementia or Alzheimer's. That's not where they belong, and yet that's where they are. The cost to us, in terms of an economic cost, is horrific, but the cost to the individual, because they're not receiving the proper care in a hospital bed—it's not designed for that—is even more horrific.

They're four times more likely to receive a diagnosis of being just frail, and yet you can certainly have the disease without being frail, and twice as likely to have 10 or more aggregate co-morbidity conditions. For example, we're now discovering, in my riding, that we have people who have developmental delay issues and are also starting to experience dementia and Alzheimer's. We are also having people who have Parkinson's and have Alzheimer's and dementia. The co-morbidity issue is a significant challenge as individuals and their caregivers are trying to cope with these issues. They're four times as likely to experience alternate-level-of-care days following an acute care admission.

So what's the challenge? You can look at it from strictly an economic challenge of \$770 million within the next year for the cost to start to care for individuals with this disease. We can also look at it strictly from a curative perspective, but we know there's no cure for this disease. But we can look at it from the perspective of prevention through research and discussion with the caregivers on better care for those individuals.

Let's chat a little bit about the research and the need for that research, because strictly by numbers, in the demographics, there is no question, whether you live in Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, or Arkansas: We have to deal with the aging demographic and the diseases that are related, and dementia and Alzheimer's are at the top of the list. We must do it; we have no choice.

How do we do it? Do we institutionalize everyone? Absolutely not. Prevention must be at the forefront of what we're thinking, and obviously, through prevention, the number one is research and investment in that research. Then we start to look at, well, we've got an economic—and we still have to deal with those who have the disease, and as that disease progresses, what can we do? We can start to address it from the ground up, not from 40,000 feet in a ministry and a bureaucracy, but from the people who are actually dealing with this on a day-to-day basis, whether it's the person who has the first initial stages of Alzheimer's or dementia, whether it's the caregiver who's trying to provide—remember, this disease can start in your 50s or as late as your 80s, so you've got an extraordinary range. But also remember, most of it is with people who are older and their caregivers are older. We don't have a system that's designed to provide additional support for these individuals more so than if they were just considered old and frail. So that changes the amount of support. Respite is an extraordinary need among the people who are the caregivers.

But we can also talk to these individuals who are experiencing this from the physician's perspective, the personal care support workers, the individuals themselves who are going through this and their caregivers, as to what they need on a day-to-day basis to stay in their homes with the required support, as opposed to being institutionalized. That's where I'm coming from.

I'd like to share a few personal experiences that I've had. I'm not going to share names, but an individual lady

gave me a book she wrote about her experience. This was an example of a person whose husband was the CEO of a company. He was an extraordinarily capable individual. He ran a multi-million dollar corporation. And he got Alzheimer's. As this disease progressed, it changed his personality. She tried to cope with this. She tried respite. Their friends dropped off the radar. They were no longer invited out for dinners because his behaviour was erratic; he was agitated, and it was difficult.

Suddenly, she was coping alone. She didn't have the support mechanism of a family, and she and her husband, as he went through this disease, were struggling. As he became more agitated and angrier, what happened was, he started to accuse her of doing things or things happening in their home, especially with another man in the house, and that changed the dynamic in the relationship with this person. It wasn't until she realized, when he was so angry one day—she found him in front of a mirror arguing with that person: How dare he be in his house? He didn't recognize himself.

You can imagine the impact on this individual. But had she known that or had she had some support mechanism beforehand to help her cope with these changes, she may not have had to struggle so long before she had to ultimately deal with this.

Another where—I can use this because it's my brother-in-law, and I've spoken about Norm before; what an extraordinary man, now dealing with the final, advanced stages of Alzheimer's, but who spent his day happy as could be, whistling 24 hours a day as long as he was awake. The stress on an individual trying to cope with that is extraordinary, the loneliness and the guilt you feel as you are trying to deal with this emotional turmoil of caring for someone as they are leaving you. If you are married for 60 years to somebody, the last thing you want to do is institutionalize them in a long-term-care home, because really that's what that care ultimately becomes. You want to be able to keep them close to you because you've had them close for 50 years, 60 years, or in some cases, longer—65, 70 years. The extraordinary guilt that these individuals feel as they have to let that person go, to me, is incredible. If we have some way of supporting them to keep that individual at home, it's our responsibility to do that.

All this bill says is, let's start talking about it. Let's put together that advisory committee that says, let's bring those caregivers together who say, "What is it we can do to help people as they go through dementia, Alzheimer's, the stages of the disease?" I think we have a responsibility to do that. So you've got an economic case that's going to tell you it's a heck of a lot cheaper, and you've got an ethical, moral case that tells you that this is the kind of thing you must and should do for the people of the province of Ontario, because it is the right thing to do.

**1610**

There are many people—the Alzheimer society, in particular—who have done extraordinary work in support, but they can only do so much. They actually

need the direction and the ultimate involvement, full involvement, of government to move this forward, as government does with any particular disease. We need to provide the support, whether it's in the research, the planning, the strategies, and I can think of no better people to do it than those who are involved in it on a day-to-day basis, who know and understand the struggles of individuals either with the disease or coping with the disease as a support person and trying to help them.

Years ago, I met a lady, and it was through the Alzheimer Society, at a very special meeting—it was an AGM—and I'll just share this with you, because it's really been my motivation in this. She said that as she went through the stages of this disease with her husband—it was a psychologist telling the story—one of the things that happened is, you try so hard to cope, so hard to deal with it, and you go through all the emotions, that that day comes when that person looks at you and says, "And who are you?" And then you realize that, in that journey, you never got to say goodbye to that person you so desperately cared for. I think that's wrong. I just think that's wrong, and I think we have a responsibility to kick-start this and get it going, and I think we can do this by working together, because Alzheimer's definitely isn't a partisan issue. It belongs to each and every one of us, in every riding across this province, and I think that working together, starting with a very simple advisory group to give recommendations to the Minister of Health on how to move forward, is not asking an awful lot.

I'm asking for your support today so that we can move this forward. Again, I want to say thank you to everyone who has been so encouraging as we've taken this journey with this bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** It is truly a pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 48. I would like to start by thanking the member from Etobicoke Centre for her tremendous leadership on this issue and for taking the initiative to bring it forward to the floor of this House today. I'm very proud to be a co-sponsor of the bill, along with the member from Parkdale-High Park.

I would like to welcome our guests in the gallery today for providing us with the education, the information, knowing the extraordinary work that you do with people in our community each and every day. So thank you for being here today for this debate.

This is the second time that this issue has been debated here in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, and I'm certainly hopeful that we will be able to get this to and through third reading as soon as possible, because we really need to take urgent action in order to stem the tide, the tsunami, of Alzheimer's that is coming our way with our aging population, and we know that we are going to be facing vastly increased numbers of people who are being diagnosed with both Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia in the next few years.

Dr. David Walker, who is the alternate-level-of-care lead provincially, said in 2011, "Our society now



confronts a growing phenomenon—that of a burgeoning aging population of individuals living with frailty and/or multiple co-morbidities, all of which may be confounded by the challenges of dementia.”

The statistics are truly alarming. As Ontario’s baby boomers enter their senior years, the number of people suffering from dementia will increase from 200,000 in 2013 to approximately 300,000 by 2025. And I do have statistics from both my riding of Whitby—Oshawa and also Durham region, which indicate that our area is going to be very severely impacted by this disease. Specifically, there are roughly 78,000 seniors living in Durham region alone, and that number will grow by almost half, or 44%, by 2020. With some 7,000 of those seniors suffering from Alzheimer’s and dementia, Durham region currently has the seventh largest population of individuals living with Alzheimer’s and dementia in the province. Incredibly, that figure is expected to double to more than 15,000 cases of Alzheimer’s or other dementias by 2030.

Furthermore, Ontario’s Central East health region has the second highest number of people with dementia, and over the next four years this region will have over 25,000 people diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and related dementia. It’s certainly clear that as our population enters their senior years over the next decade, both Ontario’s health care system and the health care system in Durham region will experience a serious influx of persons living with Alzheimer’s disease or other dementias.

Now, while Alzheimer’s itself is a serious issue for both the individuals and families that are dealing with it, this seriousness is considerably elevated when you consider the disease’s impact on the broader health system. That’s one of the issues we need to take a look at, the economic factor.

Specifically, persons with dementia are three times as likely to be hospitalized compared to seniors without the disease, four times as likely to receive diagnoses of frailty, and twice as likely to have 10 or more aggregated co-morbid conditions. They’re also four times as likely to experience alternate-level-of-care days following acute care admission.

In 2009-10, nearly one quarter of Canadian seniors who were hospitalized with ALC days had a diagnosis of dementia. Moreover, hospital stays were twice as long on average, the median being 20 versus nine days for people with dementia compared to seniors without the disease.

In summary, dementia patients are intensive users of health care resources, so it’s absolutely vital for the long-term sustainability of our health care system that we consider strategies for tackling this disease and incorporate them into our long-term health care plan.

There are a lot of issues that need to be resolved in order to deal with the challenges of Alzheimer’s and other dementias, and we need to have a multi-faceted strategy. We need to continue our research into the causes of Alzheimer’s, to support people who have been diagnosed and to promote proven therapies and services which can slow the progress of the disease.

But so far, I’ve only talked about the economic impact. As the member from Etobicoke Centre said, we

need to consider the moral and ethical issues related here. It’s the right thing to do, to step forward to help individuals and families who are trying to cope with this disease under very, very difficult circumstances.

I think all of the members of this House know of constituents who are living in our community, mostly frail elderly people where one spouse has been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and the other one is left to cope with it with very few support services and very little respite. I think it’s a particular aspect of Alzheimer’s where the caregiver gets very worn down because it’s very one-way communication. You never get the positive feedback because of the nature of the illness to feel that you’ve done a good job, that you’re making them happy, that you’re making their life worthwhile. It just continues to drain away from you, especially when you get to the point where they no longer recognize you. The caregivers in this case are a very particular group of people that we really need to support, both physically and emotionally, as they go through their journey. They are exhausted and they have little hope.

That’s why I feel so strongly that Bill 48 needs to be passed, and I would urge all of my colleagues to support it because although the responsibility for developing the actual Alzheimer’s strategy will continue to rest with the Minister of Health, the minister will be required to take into account the recommendations made by the Alzheimer Advisory Council as well as the Ontario Health Quality Council.

We’re very fortunate that we have very good starting points here to get people around the table and to start talking. I would like to commend the Alzheimer Society, which has done tremendous work in this area with many programs and services that are extremely valuable in our community.

Among other things, you’ve been very helpful in educating us as MPPs about what the need is and some of the strategies that you would recommend that we put into place. I think that the advisory council would be an ideal venue for us to get all of the relevant parties around the table to actually talk through a provincial strategy.

I would like to make mention of one strategy that I think is excellent that provides very valuable service that I first became aware of during the course of the work that the members here that were involved with the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addiction, and that’s the service called First Link. For those of you who aren’t familiar with this service, it provides a point of contact for people with dementia, making it quicker and easier for them to access expert care and resources in their community right after diagnosis.

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This can be a huge help, not only to the individuals but to their caregivers, helping them to understand what they can expect, first of all, with the progression of the disease, things they can do to maybe slow the progress of the disease, and ways that they can cope. Its success lies in the coordination of locally available resources, and I think that in this time of economic restraint, it’s vital for

us to take a look at what we can do with those limited resources in order to be able to stretch them as far as possible. This is an excellent starting point, and one that I hope will be seriously considered in advancing fully across the province of Ontario, because it does provide such a valuable resource, both to the individuals affected as well as to their families.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, again I would like to thank the member from Etobicoke Centre for bringing this forward, and the member from Parkdale–High Park for co-sponsoring it, because we know that over the next 10 to 15 years, as Ontario faces more and more challenging health challenges, based on our aging population, we need to do whatever we can to combat both Alzheimer's and its spinoff effects, and to support the families who are impacted by this disease, in order to really provide the quality service that I think people quite rightly expect from their health care system.

Including these strategies in our long-term-care plan is vital, and I think that Bill 48 is a significant first step in achieving the goal and creating the kind of health care system that we really want to see brought forward to support people with Alzheimer's and related dementias.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak on this matter.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an absolute pleasure to rise. I first want to echo my colleagues the member from Etobicoke Centre and the member from Whitby–Oshawa in thanking the Alzheimer Society for all the good work you do and for sitting through a very long afternoon. Thank you for being here.

I want to thank, of course, the woman who tabled the bill, the member from Etobicoke Centre. I have to say that both these women, the member from Whitby–Oshawa and the member from Etobicoke Centre, are phenomenal members of this Legislature. I have co-written a number of bills with them. They are certainly the very face of making this Legislature work, and I want to thank them for doing that, for always putting the interests of their constituents first.

By the way, I can't say this about the member from Whitby–Oshawa, but the member from Etobicoke Centre is an incredible cook. I've actually been to her house for dinner. So I'll say that for her as well.

I want to start by telling a story of one of our constituents. I'm going to call her Rosemary, obviously for reasons of anonymity.

Rosemary is one of those constituents who walked into our office—we all see them. They come in the door and they've got this much paper with them, and it's colour-coded, and you kind of get this feeling when they walk in, because you know it's going to be a story of woe. You often feel, and rightly so, that there's not a lot you can do for them, especially if they've been in the system for a while.

Rosemary told us her story, and her story was the following. She said that she had a very vibrant career. I

won't tell you what that is, either, but she had a very vibrant career. She was a single mother whose own mother came down with dementia that was then diagnosed as Alzheimer's. She quit her job to look after her mother. She was an only child, and nobody else was going to do it. She and her daughter moved into her mother's house.

As the disease progressed, of course, Rosemary had more and more on her plate as a single mother and as a caregiver and, remember, without an income now—without an income. So what did they have in terms of financial resources? Well, they had a house, so they took out a reverse mortgage on the mother's house. Luckily, they had a house, and luckily it was paid off.

I can tell you—this is a story that I've heard echoed through many other constituents—it didn't take very long to get respite care for herself, because she couldn't be there 24 hours a day. She just couldn't; nobody can. She had to pay someone to come in and help; she had to pay someone so she could go out and just do shopping and errands; and that began to eat up the value of the house.

By the time her mother passed away, Rosemary was destitute. She was literally homeless, on the street. By this time, she herself was getting close to 60. Her years of earning potential were over. It was very difficult to find a job. She still had a child to support. All the value of the house had been used up in the care of her mother.

This is not an unusual story. I have many, many constituents—and before this, I was a United Church minister and had many congregants who were in this position. I remember one wonderful woman; she had, I think, five children, and she had umpteen grandchildren. This poor woman simply lived too long, is the way I would describe her. She lived to be 96. She was incredibly brilliant in her youth. She was an amazing community activist. She lived too long. She ended up with dementia. She ended up, again, running through all the resources of her house that she had to sell. None of the children could take her in, for various reasons—because it's difficult; it's hard to look after somebody 24/7—and she ended up in a ward, and that's how she passed away. Such a tragic death and, I feel, such an unnecessary one in many ways. We just don't have the supports.

What the member has suggested and what we're all suggesting, the three of us in this bill, is that, first and foremost, we've got to start looking at this issue. First and foremost, we've got to get people together, talking about this issue, looking at this issue and then giving some very practical suggestions to the Minister of Health so that something can be done about this issue. That's critical.

I have lots of ideas. The New Democrats put forward a number of ideas in our platform, mainly and mostly around the caregiver problem. I just want to go over a few of those because I think they're good suggestions, and the committee can look at them.

The successful SMILE program: We think that should be expanded. Often, in the early stages especially, just somebody to come in, somebody to do the shopping,



somebody to help out around the house, somebody to help with quite the menial chores—giving a bath, that kind of thing—can make all the difference to a family. That can keep the person in the home a great deal longer. That's important. We thought and we still think that much more money should go into that program.

Obviously, what you've heard from the others is the enormity of the problem. You've heard the statistics; I won't go over them. But they all point to the reality, both financial and otherwise, of the fact that many people who are diagnosed as frail, who end up with some diagnosis, end up in emergency wards, end up in hospital beds at a rate of about \$450 a day or more. That's not where they should be, obviously. Again, home care would answer that problem.

We think there should be more hours of home care—and that's beyond the simple menial jobs that need to be done—provided. The current waiting list now of 10,000 people for home care services is absolutely unacceptable. We need to do something about the waiting list; we need to whittle it down. Of course, that's going to require some resources.

I think both members alluded to the fact that this is not money out the door; this is an investment, not only in the health of the person who has a diagnosis but the health of their family, the health of a whole range of supports in the community that are affected by the one person with that one diagnosis. This is an investment. It's an investment that will see a return because, because if there is an alternative level of care, we can keep them in the home with supports. If something can happen, then we will save money. We will save money, and the story of Rosemary herself becoming someone who needs to be looked after won't be repeated.

We know that one of the social determinants of health is poverty. So many families are driven to poverty because of this diagnosis. Again, you heard that this isn't a remote diagnosis; this is one in 10 people we'll be looking at.

Currently, there are 25,000 Ontarians waiting for long-term care. Clearly, we, as New Democrats, think we've got to do something better with that waiting list. We've got to whittle that down. That's not good enough.

My husband and I were in Sweden a few years back, and they had a very innovative program. I just send this out as a thought for, I hope, the advisory committee that I hope will be struck after this bill is, I hope, passed. One of the things they did in Sweden was, they realized that institutional care was the most expensive care and it wasn't necessarily the best care. So what they did—and Sweden was very innovative—they tried to move people out of institutions, not into them. What they did was say that if you have a family member who is willing to care for someone, we will train you, we will even unionize you—make you part of a union that that will supervise you—and send you back into your home with a salary to look after that person. They found that doing that was way cheaper than putting them in a long-term-care home, even, or an institution, a phenomenal program that they

say works—again, just a thought, just a suggestion. It sounds outrageously expensive, but in fact they found it was much, much cheaper.

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What I'm saying, in short, is that there are ideas from around the world, from jurisdictions we could look at where people look after people better and where they have the same rates of diagnoses. So that's where we are now.

Of course, the bill looks to a place in the future where we want to be, and that's where we don't have the numbers of people diagnosed with Alzheimer's and dementia that we do now. I love that, because if there's one thing we do in this place that I wish we did a little more often is dream big. The Alzheimer Society has shown us that you can dream big. We look forward to a future where no one has Alzheimer's and no one has dementia because we actually figure out what causes it and we actually find a cure. That's also part of what this council can start to look at. Look at the research from around the world. Look at the research from other jurisdictions. Figure out what we can do here in the interim until we get to that halcyon day. Again, that's where we want to get.

So again, I love the idea of a council that really sits down with people who have had experience—people who know what they're talking about—and starts to look at the remedy, because, boy oh boy, we need one. We need one.

I remember many, many cases of serving communion to people with Alzheimer's and dementia in nursing homes across my riding of Parkdale—High Park. I want to say a shout-out to all the caregivers in the institutions, in the long-term-care homes and in private homes who are dealing with this issue, because what a working day that is. I mean, Lord knows they need our prayers and they need to hear from us. They need to hear from us in terms of our support for what they do, often with very, very little resources to guide them. So a shout-out to them as well, because we know they're watching, we know they're out there and we know this is affecting them on a personal basis.

The member from Etobicoke Centre said something that I found moving: to not even have a good-bye from someone you love, to not even be able to say good-bye—I mean, it doesn't really get much more tragic than that. And that's what we're talking about. So this is a small step, but it's an essential one because we need good information and we need information to advise policy. So we need that next step, too, that out of this comes policy.

I was impressed with the work of the select committee, probably the best work I've seen done here in a nonpartisan way, and their many recommendations. But we haven't put those recommendations into effect. I would hate to see the same happen with the Alzheimer's advisory committee. We need to pass the bill, we need to set the committee, we need to hear from the committee and then we need to act on what this council does and says and advises.

Thank you to the member from Whitby—Oshawa. Thank you to the member from Etobicoke Centre. Thank you to all the caregivers out there. Thank you to the Alzheimer Society. And please, everyone here, say yes to this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from York South—Weston.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to start by thanking the member from Etobicoke Centre for bringing forward this bill. We know that she has been, and is, a strong advocate for her constituents and for seniors all across Ontario. I wish to also thank the co-sponsors of the bill.

I have seen first-hand how Alzheimer's takes hold of the lives of both patients and their caregivers. I have several close friends who have lived with the physical and emotional challenges of managing this disease, many while raising a young family and working full-time. The day-to-day struggles of caring for a loved one at home often leave many patients and caregivers living in isolation, and isolation is not a solution.

I think we agree that the issues and concerns facing Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers need to be heard and not forgotten. We have heard today here that with our aging population, the number of people suffering from dementia will rise dramatically. Next year, there will be over 200,000 seniors with the disease in Ontario, and that number is expected to rise by 50%—50%—in the next decade.

The riding which I have the privilege to represent, York South—Weston, has a large population of seniors, and it's right next door to Etobicoke Centre. I've had the chance to speak to many of my constituents who are caregivers for loved ones living with this terrible disease. They all say the same thing: "We need more supports for the people living with Alzheimer's, and also for the people taking care of them."

Alzheimer's is a disease that affects everyone surrounded by it. It is estimated that each person with dementia has between one and three individuals serving as informal caregivers. These caregivers are usually close family members, such as a spouse or children, who in most cases take time off work to provide for their loved ones. Sometimes the spouse is the only caregiver. He or she is often an elderly person as well, suffering perhaps from other health issues. They dedicate all their time—their days, their nights—to being the primary caregiver, and everything becomes an issue, even running a little errand or attending to their own needs and their health priorities. They need respite, and even social diversion. They need to talk to others; they need to have some advice; they need direction. As time goes on, as the member from Etobicoke Centre mentioned, these patients will start not to recognize their family members. They're beside them; they're alive. They need extraordinary assistance, but in a way, if you're their caregiver, you are losing a bit of them day by day, and it's very hard to let go.

I have seen first-hand just how exhausting and frustrating it can be to take care of a family member living with dementia. The very nature of the disease—the

decline in self-management, memory loss, mood swings and trouble making decisions—puts an enormous burden on their caregivers, who in turn can burn out from the stress. We've already spoken about the cost. It only makes sense to act now to establish this advisory council, to explore ways of integrating the health care services, to develop a strategy for the research, the treatment and the prevention.

This bill provides the right framework for this, and I support it in its entirety. I wish the three members all the success. I express all my support, and I look forward to working with the member for Etobicoke Centre in assisting her in seeing this piece of legislation move forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I'm really pleased to speak to Bill 48, An Act to establish the Alzheimer Advisory Council and develop a strategy for the research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. I'd like to applaud all three members: the member from Etobicoke Centre for bringing this bill forward, and the members from Whitby—Oshawa and Parkdale—High Park for co-sponsoring it.

This issue of Alzheimer's is really important for me, because my riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville and the entire region of Peel has the second-largest growing population of seniors and, by extension, Alzheimer's. Here's a shocking statistic: For the Mississauga-Halton region, next year, in 2013, the population of people over the age of 85 is going to grow by 71.2%. Think about that: 71.2% in one year. We are in 2012, and next year it's going to grow by 71.2%, and that means, by extension, all of the diseases that are associated with growing older—and of course Alzheimer's is one of them. So I'm really pleased to be able to talk to this bill today.

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What this bill really does is, it recognizes the fact that Ontario has an aging population and that, along with the aging population, diseases like Alzheimer's are going to grow and we need new ideas to tackle this situation. I think all of the speakers who have spoken before me have, in some form or fashion, alluded to the idea that we need new ideas to figure out how to deal with this, because I know, and we all know, that the same old, same old cannot go on.

We've talked about how we are using our resources, the fact that patients with Alzheimer's are ending up in hospitals, where they shouldn't be, taking up resources that could be used for something else. So what can be done? That is what this bill is about.

It begins by focusing on public education. One of the things that I did in preparation for speaking to the bill was to try to learn more about this disease. The one thing that I have learned is how difficult it is for anyone to watch their loved one slip away day by day. The one unifying theme I have found is how many people say, "I wish I'd known earlier that this was what was going on," because in the early stages, often, we don't know that our loved one is suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's. It



leads to a lot of problems, because you don't understand why this person is behaving this way, so that leads to a lot of guilt later on. But more importantly, if we had had intervention earlier on, we could have helped improve the quality of life.

So the fact that this bill wants to establish an advisory council that's going to then focus on public education is really, really key. To be able to learn and recognize those symptoms of Alzheimer's or dementia early on for all of us is really important so that we can help our loved ones or ourselves and also seek treatment so that the end result and the outcomes are more important.

It also talks about access to care and streamlining care for Alzheimer's—I won't go into much detail on that—and, of course, research. I know the member from Etobicoke Centre spoke to that.

The other piece that I really liked about this is the support for the caregiver, because I know all of us talked about how, as hard as it is to suffer from dementia or Alzheimer's, it's equally hard for the person who's giving care. Often these people are at their wits' end in terms not just of monetary resources, but the emotional resource, the loneliness, the isolation that comes with trying to look after somebody full-time and still carry on with your life.

So this bill is really about a new way of tackling a problem that is only going to grow. I'm really pleased this bill was brought forward. I know that there are no silver bullets in life, but this is a good start. Thank you so much for bringing it forward. I look forward to all-party support.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to be able to rise in support of Bill 48, which has been brought by the member for Etobicoke Centre. It is an Act to establish the Alzheimer Advisory Council and develop a strategy for the research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

I was one of those fortunate people who were able to serve on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. I was surprised at how many people came forward and wanted to talk about Alzheimer's and dementia as part of that story, because that wasn't one of the things that I had really anticipated. But time after time, as we went around the province, we would have people from the local Alzheimer's society or people who had a family member come forward and say, "You know, as a society we really need to pay attention to this because the numbers are going up so dramatically."

We saw that in my riding of Guelph when we got an allocation at St. Joseph's Health Centre to add an additional 96 long-term-care beds. They actually, in consultation with the other long-term-care providers in Guelph, said, "You know, we've got a huge need to figure out how we manage the people with Alzheimer's who are in long-term care." They actually took a third of those beds and set up a behavioural unit. The idea here is that people from various long-term-care settings, and maybe alternative levels of care—and maybe even some people at

home—would be able to come to the behavioural unit and get some support in terms of people figuring out how to best manage the behaviour of that particular individual at that particular stage in their dementia journey, and then go back to the other setting that they had come from, but for somebody to actually have the opportunity to look at the individual and figure out how best to support this person and, if they're going back to a home setting, this person's family. I think this particular bill gives us the opportunity.

I thank the members from Whitby—Oshawa and Parkdale—High Park for their support, because setting up an advisory committee allows all of us to get together and to think about what do we do best to manage this disease and to support the family caregivers. It really is a challenge that we need to face up to dealing with in a very humane and sensible way, and I think this gives us the opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** As deputy critic for health, rural and northern, it's my pleasure to stand and speak to this bill, and I applaud the three co-sponsors of this bill.

Alzheimer's is something that's going to touch all of us and all of our families at some point in time. It's something we need to put more thought into. We need to put more decisions in that are going to actually turn into actions that are going to have resources and services out there.

This has been brought to the Legislature twice, and I'm hopeful that it will get to third reading, because it's something we need to take urgent action on to stem this tsunami of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia that Ontario will be facing in just a few years.

Dr. David Walker, the provincial ALC lead—no relation—said in 2001, "Our society now confronts a growing phenomenon—that of a burgeoning aging population of individuals living with frailty, and/or multiple co-morbidities, all of which may be confounded by the challenges of dementia."

Mr. Speaker, the statistics are alarming. As our baby boomers enter their senior years, the number of people suffering will increase from 200,000 in 2013 to approximately 300,000 by 2025—significant. My riding of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound has a higher-than-average incidence of seniors, so this is particularly pertinent in my riding. It's something that we need to be making sure we understand and we spend time on. This is definitely an issue that the three parties can work together on and move forward.

With some 7,000 seniors in Durham suffering, it's just another number and another statistic that points out to—my colleague Mr. O'Toole from Durham is dealing with this. Christine Elliot, in her riding of Oshawa—again, very significant numbers that she's dealing with—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the member to refer to ridings and not names.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My apologies. The point that I was trying to stress is that this is impacting all ridings across Ontario.

Alzheimer's itself is a serious issue for the individuals and families that suffer from this. The seriousness is also considerably elevated when one considers the disease's impact on the broader health system. We have burgeoning numbers that are going to continue to snowball and increase, and we're going to have to be ready for this. This is a tsunami coming our way, not unlike the debt that we're facing right now. We have to ensure that we're thinking ahead, we have to take proactive measures, and we have to make tough decisions to ensure we have the services for those people most in need. This not only impacts the victim but significantly impacts the families of those people suffering with either Alzheimer's or dementia.

In summary, dementia patients are intensive users of health care resources. It's absolutely vital for the long-term sustainability of our health care system that we consider strategies for attacking this disease and incorporate them into our long-term health care plan. We need to take action—like the budget—today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Etobicoke Centre, you have two minutes for a reply.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'd like to say thank you, obviously, to my co-sponsors from Whitby—Oshawa and Parkdale—High Park, and to the members who spoke, from York South—Weston, Mississauga East—Cooksville, Guelph and Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. I think each of them touched exactly on what the issue is.

The fact is that none of us are untouched by Alzheimer's, whether it's personal or within our constituency. It has been recognized that in fact it is a tsunami. It has also been recognized that it is something we must address and we cannot ignore, and if we do, we ignore it at our peril.

Is there a cost? Absolutely. It will be \$770 million a year. And so the question must be asked: Will those dollars be spent wisely, efficiently and effectively to address the issue? But there's a greater cost, and that's the human cost. You can't build enough long-term-care homes to deal with the staggering numbers with Alzheimer's and dementia that will face us, nor should you when there are alternatives we can do to address that. This isn't all the answer; it's just the beginning of bringing together the people, including the patients themselves—the persons suffering from the disease—to help us develop the strategies and then give those recommendations to the minister for consideration.

To me, it just makes eminent sense to bring together the people most impacted and affected by this disease to help us deliver a sustainable strategy as we move forward in what are going to be some very difficult fiscal times ahead of us. And we do this because these are the people in our communities whom we care for. This is our obligation and our responsibility, not only as members of this House but just as human beings caring for one another, making sure we care for those who are most vulnerable and most affected. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** On a point of order, Speaker—my apologies—I want to correct my record. During my deliberation, I made reference to the insurance bureau of Ontario. There is no such thing; it is the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario. I want to correct my record.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member is allowed to correct his own record.

## PROTECTION OF MINORS IN AMATEUR SPORTS ACT, 2012 LOI DE 2012 SUR LA PROTECTION DES MINEURS PARTICIPANT À DES SPORTS AMATEURS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Ouellette has moved second reading of Bill 24. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I would refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The request is to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Agreed? Agreed.

## NEW DRIVERS' INSURANCE RATE REDUCTION ACT, 2012 LOI DE 2012 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE POUR LES NOUVEAUX CONDUCTEURS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Sergio has moved second reading of Bill 71. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

We will deal with this vote at the end of regular business.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Sorry. In my opinion, the nays have it. We will deal with the vote at the end of other business.

## ALZHEIMER ADVISORY COUNCIL ACT, 2012 LOI DE 2012 CRÉANT LE CONSEIL CONSULTATIF DE LA MALADIE D'ALZHEIMER

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mrs. Cansfield has moved second reading of Bill 48. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'd love to stand up and ask for third reading. I'll refer it to justice or social policy, whichever—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Pick one.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Social policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Agreed? Agreed.

#### NEW DRIVERS' INSURANCE RATE REDUCTION ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE POUR LES NOUVEAUX CONDUCTEURS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1654 to 1659.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would members please take their seats? Mr. Sergio has moved second reading of Bill 71. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura  
Bentley, Christopher  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bisson, Gilles  
Bradley, James J.  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Campbell, Sarah  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Duguid, Brad

Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Hoskins, Eric  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Kwinter, Monte  
Leal, Jeff  
Mangat, Amrit  
Mantha, Michael  
Marchese, Rosario  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNeely, Phil  
Miller, Paul  
Moridi, Reza  
Murray, Glen R.  
Natyshak, Taras

Oraziotti, David  
Prue, Michael  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Sandals, Liz  
Schein, Jonah  
Sergio, Mario  
Singh, Jagmeet  
Sousa, Charles  
Taylor, Monique  
Vanhof, John  
Wong, Soo  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 43; the nays are 0.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the bill approved.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred—Mr. Sergio?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** General government, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The request is to have the bill referred to general government. Agreed? Agreed.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENT INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION DES LOYERS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 24, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** When the House recessed, Mr. McNaughton had the floor. Mr. McNaughton.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'm pleased to rise today to continue speaking on Bill 19. Bill 19 amends section 120 of the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, with regard to the annual rent increase guideline. The bill further amends the Residential Tenancies Act.

As everyone across the province knows, Ontario's economy is in bad shape. When it comes to housing in the province of Ontario, whether you're a landlord, a tenant or a service provider, the situation is far from perfect. Everyone is facing serious challenges. The PC Party believes that there needs to be action that results in Ontario becoming more affordable for the people who live and operate a business in the province.

Under the current government, we have seen the exact opposite. Life is getting more expensive by the day. The debt continues to grow, along with the deficit, and Ontarians continue to suffer for Dalton McGuinty's mismanaged finances. Under the McGuinty government, hydro rates have increased eight times since 2003, with another increase coming, as we all know in this House, on May 1, for a total of 84% since 2003. For a family with a smart meter at your home, well, you've seen your bill go up by a staggering 150%.

As a result, people are struggling to just pay their heating bill. "Just getting by" is something that I hear far too often from the people in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. Forget getting ahead; people in Ontario can barely afford to heat their home in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

It's important to remember that when we talk about housing, it's not just about a building. In the case of this legislation, a formula is used to calculate how much somebody's rent is going to go up each and every year. A home is more than a place to hang your hat; it is a place to connect with loved ones, to share a meal, a place where you belong. Having a place to call home gives people the basis from which their life begins. Without it,

there's no hope to maintain employment or get the education and training necessary to break the cycle of poverty.

Too many people in this province are living paycheque to paycheque with nothing put away for an emergency. If they lost their job or missed one week of pay, they would be finding themselves either at the mercy of their landlord or out on the street. That's the problem that the people of Ontario are struggling with.

Bill 19, the bill that this Liberal government is proposing, does not do anything to address the real issue. They, as always, aren't doing what the people of Ontario want and, most importantly, what the people of Ontario need.

This bill actually would have very little overall impact, as ministry staff—they themselves have stated, during a briefing, that the 10-year average increase is 2.1% per year, and over the last five years it's 1.7% annually. It's a move by the minister to be seen as being on the side of tenants, while there are clearly more substantive changes to the act she can undertake to truly improve the situation for landlords and tenants.

As I mentioned earlier, it's not just tenants that are feeling the pinch in Ontario, Speaker. The reality is that landlords in this province have seen their costs going up and up and up, particularly for small landlords that I speak to in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. The landlords in my riding are hard-working small business people, and the landlords I speak to are telling me that right now in Ontario, the rental business, for too many, is a money-losing operation.

This is a story that, unfortunately, more and more small business owners across the province are telling me. Our party repeatedly warned the government of the risk of Ontario's rental housing stock deteriorating, with the

additional cost of the HST on top of the risk that small landlords might get out of the business altogether.

The McGuinty Liberals ignored the warnings and originally told landlords to absorb the cost of the HST, putting the aging stock of Ontario's rental housing at risk. Dalton McGuinty has become an expert at driving business out of the province. He refuses to address the real issues. Ontario needs to be the number one place to do business in Canada. This is our priority, and this is the priority of the entire PC caucus. It is very clear that it is not the priority of the Dalton McGuinty Liberals.

I think, as my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga just mentioned, that Dalton McGuinty is also ignoring the will of the Legislature, as we've stated a number of times. So we would like to call for adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1707 to 1737.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would all members please take their seats? Mr. McNaughton has moved adjournment of the House.

All in favour, please stand and remain standing.

All opposed, please stand and remain standing.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 38; the nays are 0.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** This House stands adjourned until Monday, 10:30.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*The House adjourned at 1740.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milligan, Rob E. (PC) <b>Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Northumberland–Quinte West Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB) <b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak  
Grant Crack, Kim Craiton  
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris  
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak  
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue  
Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Teresa Piruzza  
Bob Delaney, Victor Fedeli  
Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton  
Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza  
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: David Zimmer  
Sarah Campbell, Michael Coteau  
Joe Dickson, Rosario Marchese  
David Oraziotti, Laurie Scott  
Todd Smith, Jeff Yurek  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przedziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Bill Mauro  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely  
Donna H. Cansfield, Helena Jaczek  
Bill Mauro, Jim McDonell  
Phil McNeely, Randy Pettapiece  
Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor  
Lisa M. Thompson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Collé  
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren  
Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan  
Shafiq Qaadri  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield  
Steve Clark, Garfield Dunlop  
Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod  
Jonah Schein  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett  
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof  
Michael Coteau, Grant Crack  
Vic Dhillon, Randy Hillier  
Rod Jackson, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh  
Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
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Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
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First Session, 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 40<sup>e</sup> législature

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Monday 30 April 2012

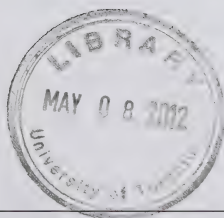
Lundi 30 avril 2012

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
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L'honorable Dave Levac

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 30 April 2012

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 30 avril 2012

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'd pleased to introduce Andrea Roberts and her daughter Emily, who are here today from Haliburton county. They're spending the day with their MPP. Welcome to the Legislature. And also—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Another?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm sorry, but yes. From Nature Conservancy of Canada, we have Erica Thompson, program manager from Georgian Bay-Huronion, and Kristyn Ferguson, stewardship coordinator.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Good morning, Speaker. This morning, I'd like to welcome Mohammed Fazole Baki and Fouzia Baki, who are here visiting from Windsor because their son, Shaumik Baki, is page captain today. Welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Haliburton—Mississippi Mills.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** Carleton—Mississippi Mills, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Carleton—Mississippi Mills.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce a guest this morning, Jesse Waslowski, who is a volunteer and is going to be working in my office to try to put conservatism into our office.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Kim Craiton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't hear you back here. It's a little too noisy in the House.

I'm really honoured to introduce some special guests who are here. First, from the city of Niagara Falls, I have my good friend the mayor of Niagara Falls, Jim Diodati. Welcome, Jim. He brought some of the key executives with him. We have Ken Todd, who is the CAO from the city of Niagara Falls. Welcome, Ken. We have Serge Felicetti, who is the director of business development for the city of Niagara Falls. The last person and the most important person I want to introduce is my new executive director from my office in Niagara Falls, Michelle Tavano.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm pleased to welcome to Queen's Park two guests: Michelle Watt, a student at Stuart Scott Public School in Newmarket; and her brother Robert

Watt, who is a third-year University of Toronto student, studying history and political science. He's going to take one of our jobs away one of these days, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Hopefully not mine.

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Good morning. I'm thrilled that today, joining us today from the city of Pickering to accept a youth friendly community award, gold status—I'd like to welcome and congratulate Jody Morris, Jesse St. Amant, Heather Butler, Karina Clendenning, Sarah Pizzale and Caitlin Kirouac. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you, and congratulations.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I take this opportunity to welcome to the Legislature of Ontario the legendary Canadian jockey Sandy Hawley, who will be here today to talk with members representing Woodbine Entertainment Group and telling the Legislature about developments that they look forward to. I invite all members of the Legislature to the dining room for a reception today.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome Winnie Wales and Peter Wales of Richmond Hill to the Ontario Legislature.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** It's my pleasure to introduce the grade 5 and grade 6 classes from Alexander Graham Bell Public School, joining us this morning with teachers Mrs. Francis and Mrs. Whitehead.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I also want to welcome the two special guests from the Nature Conservancy of Canada: Kristyn Ferguson, stewardship coordinator for Ontario; and Erica Thompson, program manager with Georgian Bay-Huronion. Welcome. It's good to have you here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm very pleased that the murmuring that's been going on is not actually heckling, but I do want to reinforce the welcome, in case anyone didn't hear it in the House. We welcome you all.

## RESIGNATION OF MEMBER FOR KITCHENER—WATERLOO

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I have a special announcement to make for the members of this House. I beg to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House for the reason of the resignation of Elizabeth Witmer as member of the electoral district of Kitchener—Waterloo, effective the 27th day of April, 2012.

Accordingly, my warrant has been issued to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.



## ELIZABETH WITMER

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition on a point order.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** On a point of order, Speaker: Given your announcement today about the resignation of the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, I would like to seek unanimous consent for each of the parties to take a few moments to pay tribute to Elizabeth Witmer, her incredible 32 years plus of public service and her historic impact in the province of Ontario as Deputy Premier and cabinet minister—

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition has sought unanimous consent. Is it the consent of the House? Do you agree? Agreed.

*Leader.*

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I know Elizabeth Witmer is joining us in the gallery here today. I'm going to have some brief comments. I've made public statements, and I know Elizabeth and I will continue to work together going forward.

I remember not too long ago, in 1995, as a newly elected MPP for the riding of Niagara South, 27 years of age, I sat in that back corner back there. In fact, it was such a far back corner, they don't even have it these days. I'd watch, as a new member—so excited to be here—the front bench that were part of Mike Harris's team that turned our province around.

In those early days, there was no doubt a lot of focus and a lot of pushback from special interests who didn't believe in the path we were taking. I saw in Elizabeth Witmer, as labour minister, somebody who stood in her place, a woman of conviction, a woman of great integrity and a woman who was a steady hand during a very turbulent time and helped change labour laws, made good on promises in the Common Sense Revolution, and who stood above those here in the Legislature with her stalwart leadership.

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Not too long after that, she was made the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. As a—what was I at the time?—29-year old, I was asked by Premier Harris to take on the role of parliamentary assistant and became sort of her right hand. What better place, I could not imagine, to learn than next to Elizabeth Witmer what it meant to take on leadership roles, what it meant to carry through on a mandate, what it meant to wade through complex issues and make good for the province of Ontario.

Another thing Elizabeth Witmer taught me at an early age is to never, ever forget the people who sent you to Queen's Park, to work hard for the riding and the people who sent you there.

Because of her mentorship, her guidance, her leadership, I had the chance, then, to serve with her at cabinet. It has been an enormous pleasure, as Leader of the Opposition, to work with her as my caucus chair, my health critic, and to continue to learn from Elizabeth.

In fact, we had a couple of conversations this weekend, emotional conversations, because the truth is, I'm sad to see her go. I'm thrilled with the new position that she has taken on. I think she's the right person for that job. But when you lose somebody in the family, particularly somebody who has been close and has played such an important role in helping not only me but a lot of us along our way, I can say how deeply we will miss Elizabeth Witmer on this side of Legislature.

Her record is well known, Speaker. I know my colleagues in the opposite parties will highlight some of this too. But as labour minister, health minister, environment minister, education minister, she was given all the tough jobs during some very difficult times. Her accomplishments are a legend. As Minister of Health: 20,000 new long-term-care beds; bringing in family health teams; Telehealth. Her work with the nurses has been copied not only across Canada but internationally, the nursing protocol. The Alzheimer's strategy—the list goes on and on. Also, Speaker, she was the first woman to serve as Deputy Premier of the province of Ontario, and now, also, the longest-serving woman MPP in the entire history of the province of Ontario.

Among all this, I think, in my talks with Elizabeth, she'll say that her greatest accomplishment is being a loving and dedicated mother to her two kids, Scott and Sarah; and her husband, Cam. And despite a schedule that you could not believe, in those roles every night, she made sure she made the commute back at night and then early in the morning to spend the time that she could with her family.

To you, Elizabeth Witmer, I say thank you. You've made an incredible impact on our party and the province of Ontario. If we had a hall of fame here in the Ontario Legislature, you'd be an inductee today.

I want to say, too, on behalf of the Ontario PC Party and our members across the province, we will be eternally grateful to Elizabeth Witmer for her leadership, her dedication, her guidance and the incredible service to our party, to our province and to the good people of Kitchener–Waterloo.

I'll miss you very much; we'll miss you very much. I wish you every success—because I know you always deliver—in your future endeavours. Thank you very much, Elizabeth Witmer.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I too want to join all of our colleagues in this House to pay tribute to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. Elizabeth Witmer's distinguished track record is well known to all of us. Her length of service, the offices she has held, and her achievements are, in a word, impressive.

But I want to speak to something I've seen from my vantage point here on the other side of the House, and that is Liz's genuine desire to serve. For nearly 22 years in this place, Liz has been reminding us that politics is fundamentally about public service. She's the real McCoy, and her community knows that. For five successive

elections, the people of Kitchener–Waterloo kept returning Ms. Witmer to this House—much to my party's chagrin—and that is surely because they see in their community what we can all see here: the genuine article; a politician with a heart for public service; a leader who cares for those around her; a dedicated, passionate, articulate, thoughtful representative of her community; someone who embodies the very best traditions of our democracy; someone who always listens to the other side; a powerful champion of the cause she has embraced on behalf of Ontarians.

Perhaps what is most impressive, Mr. Speaker, is that Liz has never lost her idealism. I think we all understand that politics at the beginning of the 21st century can be a corrosive environment, but Liz has never stopped believing in the ability of people to come together and build something better for all of us. Liz's good example reminds me of the words spoken by US congresswoman Margaret Chase Smith, who once said, "My creed is that public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people ... with full recognition that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration, that constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought ... that honour is to be earned but not bought."

Mr. Speaker, on behalf my party and on behalf the people of Ontario, I want to thank Liz for her record of public service in this House, in government and in her community. We wish you and your family the very best in the future, and if I may, hartelijk bedankt.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The leader of the third party.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Elizabeth Witmer leaves this Legislature after having served diligently for just over two decades. It's not easy being a woman in politics. Any woman in this place could tell you so. But Liz has been tough and true in the many roles she has had here, and she deserves our respect.

On a personal note, I want to thank her for having encouraged me as I sought the leadership of my party a couple of years ago. Notwithstanding our differing political perspectives, she has on occasion remarked since then on the work that I'm doing in the role, and I have been very, very appreciative of her comments and her encouragement over the years. Liz has done her best to show that you can actually reach across the aisle and achieve things together. In fact, I believe that her work around the bullying issue in schools was an example of just that.

*Applause.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Liz served her constituents with honour and, I'm sure, earned their gratitude, which I'm sure is why they continued to return her to this place election after election after election. Although we might not have seen eye to eye on many issues in the past, Elizabeth Witmer demonstrates that you can still have respect for people and earn their respect, even when your opinions are opposite.

It's interesting, Speaker, that on Saturday night I was at the BBPA—Black Business and Professional Association—gala. They had a wonderful evening. I happened to be sitting for a little while with John Tory, the former leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, and we were chatting about Liz and the work that she's done; chatting about the example she set with the RNAO, for example, an organization that, for lots of reasons, she could have had differences with, having served as Minister of Health during tough times.

But that organization had a lot of respect for her because of the dedication she showed to their issues and the commitment she showed to working with them over many, many years. In fact, they made her a lifetime member of that organization. I think that shows the kind of person that Liz is, in terms of her being able to work with other people, regardless of if there are differences and difficulties.

I think it's true to say that Elizabeth always understood that strong convictions, in fact, make for healthy debate. We've had our differences in the past, and I don't expect that to change much as she heads up the WSIB in her new role. But on behalf of New Democrats, I want to sincerely thank her and her family, because you never spend time here—you never serve here—without some sacrifices made by your family as well. On behalf of New Democrats, I want to thank Elizabeth and her family for having taken on a job over the last couple of decades that is often a thankless job. Thank you, Liz.

*Applause.*

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**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As the Speaker, it is convention that I don't participate in the applause or any of the demonstrations whatsoever, but please, be assured of my internal heart beating for you, Liz.

I also want to thank all the members for their kind and very generous words in a tribute, and I'm also told, and I understand that as a tribute to Liz Witmer, there will be no heckling today.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All right; I tried. I tried.

It is now time for oral questions.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO'S CREDIT RATING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Last week's credit rating actions, the downgrades, were a direct result of every decision that you have made since the election. Since election night, you've added billions of dollars in new spending, you've rejected the Drummond report out of hand, and you actually brought in a budget that increased spending and increased taxes, and then signed a deal to make both matters worse.

Premier, in the assembly, at every step of the way, we warned you; you were warned largely in the public. We



urged you to change course, we opposed your spending, and we told you it had to be done. But you ignored us and you ignored your critics and you thought you knew better, but now everyone knows you were wrong. Moody's downgrade—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:**—credit watch, Premier.

Will you stand up today in your place and tell the credit agencies and tell the public who pay the bills that you finally got the message?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question received from my honourable colleague, and I would encourage him, Speaker, to take a good, close look at the reports produced by the three credit rating agencies late last week. Among other things, they make it very clear that they are in fact supportive of the targets that we have in place. They are supportive of the economic assumptions that we have adopted, but they have, in truth, expressed a concern about our capacity to deliver on that plan. Specifically, Speaker, they say they have concerns about the capacity of a minority government, without the support of the opposition party, to deliver on some aggressive and ambitious targets.

It's exactly what we'll continue to say. We want to assure Ontarians we'll do everything in our power to achieve those targets.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** What a shameful answer by the Premier of the province of Ontario, at a time that we've had the first downgrade since the Bob Rae era, now happening under the Liberals. Under a PC government, Speaker, we had nine consecutive upgrades—faith in our management of the economy.

But Premier, how can you sugar-coat this? How can you say, don't worry; be happy? Are you that dramatically out of touch that a downgrade by Moody's, that a negative watch by S&P, is somehow good news? This is on your back. You have made mistake after mistake after mistake since the election, and now we're paying the price. Premier, you put Ontario in a debt spiral. Now it's time to stand up and get counted. Premier, what are you going to do to get Ontario out of this financial mess that you put us in?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I would encourage my honourable colleague to actually read the reports, because I think he'd find them enlightening. The credit rating agencies make it perfectly clear that they are very supportive of the targets that we've adopted. They are supportive of the economic assumptions that we have made. They express concerns about the ability of our minority government to deliver on our plan. They are concerned about the—

**Interjection:** Obstruction.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:**—obstructionist approach brought by the opposition. They're well aware that in the lead-up to our budget, and subsequent to the presentation

of the budget, we could not count on the official opposition to participate in any constructive way so that we could come together to ensure that we might deliver on those targets. That's the real—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:**—expressed by our credit rating agencies, and I'd ask my honourable colleague to take that into account.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Here's the problem: What the Premier is saying he knows is not accurate. It's not what's in the report. The report says, Premier, that you have had a downgrade. You have had a negative outlook. You have played with fire and now the people of Ontario are getting burned because you couldn't manage the resources for the province of Ontario. You kicked the can down the road for seven months. You had the Drummond report and you tossed it aside. This is on your back, sir. You have us on the wrong path. You've made mistake after mistake after mistake, and now it's going to cost us more to pay for his borrowing, Speaker.

It's time to chart a new course, to reverse direction, to reduce spending, to grow the economy. That's the path forward, Premier. Why don't you get the message that was sent to you loud and clear with the downgrade last week? Families do. When will you get a clue as to what's happening in the finances of our great province?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. We have a situation again where somebody is asking the question and there's heckling coming on that side, and somebody answering with heckling coming on that side. I'm going to start going into individual names now.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I guess, I say to my honourable colleague, we're going to have to agree to disagree on this. Again, I would encourage my honourable colleague to actually read the reports, because I found them to be very helpful.

I'll say it again, Speaker: What the credit rating agencies are saying is that they support our targets, they support our economic assumptions, but they have concerns about our capacity as a minority government to deliver on that.

I'll quote from the Dominion Bond Rating Service. It says the following: "DBRS cautions that this is dependent on the province achieving its fiscal targets, which entail considerable execution risk, especially given the constraints of a minority government."

Undoubtedly, the credit rating agencies have looked at the behaviour of the opposition party just a few weeks ago and their refusal to find any grounds on which we might cooperate to deliver on our very ambitious plan. I can understand they have a concern in that regard. We will not let the people on this side of the House down—we'll not let them down, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Nepean—Carleton will come to order.  
New question.

#### ONTARIO'S CREDIT RATING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Premier, this crisis is yours. This was born out of your inability to make the tough decisions to get the finances under control, to grow the economy. For seven months, sir, you did nothing but sit on your hands. You kicked the can down the road over and over again, and it's some can: a \$30-billion deficit. And now Ontario families are left holding the bag for your managerial incompetence and your refusal to get a grip on the finances of the province.

Sir, you have put us in a debt spiral. Things are happening fast and you don't seem to have a clue about what's happening around you. Will you chart a new course? Will you head in the right direction: reduce spending and grow the economy? That's our path forward. Otherwise, it's further downhill with the McGuinty Liberals.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Prince Edward—Hastings, come to order.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** As they say, Speaker, plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

The leader of the official opposition brings his stock approach to this challenge before us. He offers criticism, unvarnished, but he offers no productive process whereby we might come together and ensure that we deliver together when it comes to the plan that we put in place.

Again, Speaker, the credit rating agencies say they are supportive of our plan, they are supportive our targets, they are supportive of our economic assumptions, but they are concerned that, given the minority status of our government and the failure of the opposition to co-operate in any productive way, we can't deliver. We'll do everything we can on this side of the House to deliver on our targets.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, Speaker, the Premier seems to be so deep in his bunker mentality that he has no clue what's happening around him—no clue what's happened to the province's finances—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Peterborough, come to order.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** —the first downgrade from Moody's. S&P put us on negative outlook in December and Moody's put us on negative outlook, and you looked the other way. You shrugged your shoulders. In 2009, two downgrades.

Premier, you're taking us down the wrong track. It is reckless; it is irresponsible. I sat down with you on November 8, I gave you our plan: a mandatory public sector wage freeze; reductions in spending, not increases;

a real fix to our broken arbitration system; an end to corporate welfare. You said no. I said we'll get downgraded. You said you didn't believe me.

Premier, you were wrong, and now we're paying the price. Will you finally get a grip, realize that you've put us in a debt spiral, reverse course, grow the economy, cut spending? Otherwise, Premier, I fear the impact that your recklessness will cause the finances of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.  
Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I say to my honourable colleague, we are open and waiting and available. If he has any kind of a constructive proposal that will help us deliver on our plan, which has been supported by our credit rating agencies, then we are all ears. But to this point in time, my honourable colleague has chosen the obstructionist approach, the sit-on-your-hands approach, the do-nothing approach, the negative, ring-the-bells approach, which I don't think uphold the public interest.

I want to assure the people of Ontario once again, we will do everything in our power to deliver on our plan, and, again, we invite the opposition to find some opportunity to act in a proactive, positive and progressive way to ensure that we uphold the public interest together.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'm going to try to bring the Premier to the fiscal realities of the province. The person who got Ontario downgraded was Dalton McGuinty. I wonder how the Premier feels to be the first Premier since Bob Rae to see these downgrades in the provincial finances. I'm going to add, Speaker, Ontario is the only province to face that downgrade. It didn't happen to any of the other nine provinces. The Premier has put us in the league of beleaguered economies like Italy, Spain and Greece. That's the path he has us on.

Premier, it's time to put on the brakes, time to reverse course and time to understand the debt spiral you put us into. Will you do the right thing: Reduce spending, not increase it; grow the economy, don't phase out jobs; reverse course now, Premier and follow our recommended path before it's too late and families pay the price? Premier, will you get a grip on reality and move us in the right direction in the province of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.  
Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I would argue that just as obstructionism is irresponsible, so is talking down our economy. To somehow compare the Ontario economy, with its fundamental strengths, with its incredible resilience, to some of those less fortunate economies in Europe, again, I would argue, Speaker, is absolutely irresponsible. I believe we have a shared responsibility to champion the Ontario economy and to champion the plan that we put before the people of Ontario.



So again, I invite my honourable colleague at some point in time to stop sitting on his hands and to find a way to come together with this government so that on behalf of the people of Ontario, people we are here to represent, we can deliver on a solid plan of action.

### JOB CREATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. The government's budget launched a plan to merge all of the business support programs. My question is a simple one: Besides putting all of these programs under a single roof, has anything else really actually changed?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I thank my colleague for her question. I think she knows—I think she's very much aware—that, in fact, we are going to put together a jobs and prosperity council. That council will have as its membership representatives of the labour sector, the private sector. We're going to seek the advice of economists, academics and, of course, government members and opposition members themselves.

The purpose of that will help us better understand the strengths and challenges associated with the Ontario economy today and where it is that, working together, we can apply our collective muscle to ensure that we encounter still more success tomorrow. I invite my honourable colleague to provide us with any advice in this regard that she may care to offer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, there's over half a million people out of work in this province, and they're very worried. They're worried that they're not going to be able to find a job, and they're worried that their government isn't making the decisions that are going to help them find a job.

Is this government actually re-evaluating the support they provide to business and looking at ways to improve it, or are they merely slapping a new label on the same old methods that have left many, many people looking for work in this province?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I want to remind my honourable colleague that the budget itself commits us to 170,000 jobs. I'll remind my honourable colleague as well of our recent record when it comes to job creation in Ontario. We created 46,000 jobs last month—that's 56% of all new jobs created in Canada during the course of the past month; and since the depths of the recession, we've created some 350,000 new jobs here in Ontario—that's more jobs created in Ontario than the nine other provinces combined.

So I'd say to my honourable colleague that she does have good reason to be more optimistic about the path that we're on at the very present time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, the Drummond report recommended moving away from a focus on jobs, and people have told this government to reject that approach. It's not clear to people who are looking for work,

however, exactly what approach this government is actually taking.

Does the government have any record whatsoever of the companies that have received money in the last year, and whether or not they're actually creating jobs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I'm sure we do. One of the reasons we want to move ahead with our new southwestern Ontario economic development fund is to ensure that we can build on the successes that we've enjoyed together. It is modelled, in large part, after the northern Ontario heritage fund, the eastern Ontario economic development fund, where we've seen some tremendous returns on the relatively modest investments we've made with public dollars, in terms of the jobs that we've been creating.

Again, we're open to any advice that my honourable colleague may have to offer in that regard, but I don't want her to underestimate our continuing commitment to do everything we can, in concert with the private sector, to create more jobs here in Ontario.

### JOB CREATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Premier. For years, this government, just like the Harper government in Ottawa, has followed a strategy of no-strings-attached corporate tax giveaways, and as a result, we have less money to help the people that are hit hardest by this recession. The HST and corporate tax cuts haven't created the 600,000 jobs that were promised.

Is the government's new fund going to put a real focus on jobs, or are we going to see the same old strategy simply recycled?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Well, Speaker, on the matter of the HST, the last figures that I saw demonstrated that there has been a dramatic new investment in technology and productivity-enhancing equipment here and among Ontario businesses. In fact, our pace of investment in those areas greatly outpaces the rest of the country, so I think we are, in fact, seeing a positive benefit in that regard. We remain one of the most attractive places in North America for the world to invest in.

Again, I say to my honourable colleague that we are open to new ideas, but I'm not prepared to throw out the baby with the bathwater. We are going to re-examine all of the economic development policies and funds that we had in place in the past that were being delivered through a variety of ministries, through a variety of different programs. We think that we owe it to Ontarians to better consolidate and lend focus to ensure that we're achieving more productivity and more jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It wasn't so long ago that this Premier was lamenting the lack of investment in Ontario, so I guess he can't have it both ways.

What I know is that people are really worried. They're worried about jobs, and they think it's time for a new plan—one that focuses on working with the companies

that create the jobs, not the ones that shift the jobs away, which this government has been doing far too often.

We proposed a job creation tax credit to give companies that are creating real jobs the advantage. Is this government ready to move forward with positive ideas like this one, or are we going to see more of the same old ideas that simply aren't working, Speaker?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I know that my honourable colleague has in fact raised this very proposal with me. She's raised it publicly. We've undertaken to have the jobs and prosperity council give it some very serious consideration. We're all looking for that which works best.

The fact of the matter is, this economy continues to grow. We continue to create jobs. We have learned, just recently, that we now have the largest mining sector in all of North America. We had our very best year ever just last year.

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We're building on the growing strength of our auto sector. We're proud, as a government, that at a time of great challenge we came together on behalf of the people of Ontario and extended a hand to the auto sector. They have now repaid the loans that we sent to them, they're creating more jobs, and they're once again leading in North America.

So again I say to my honourable colleague, we have some challenges but there again are good reasons for us to be optimistic.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, celebrating the mining sector while at the same time slapping northerners with the loss of the ONTC is a pretty serious situation here in Ontario.

In communities across Ontario, people want to see solutions that actually work for them for a change, and instead, what do they see? They see tax giveaways to companies that lay people off. They see vital infrastructure like Ontario Northland given away in a fire sale, while companies that create good jobs keep leaving.

When is this government going to abandon the same old plans and start looking for some new ideas to get people back to work?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I will always acknowledge that there is always room for progress, but again, let's consider some of the facts. Last month we created 46,000 new jobs in Ontario—56% of all new jobs created in Canada. We've created over 350,000 jobs since the depths of the recession. That's more jobs than the nine other provinces combined. The mining sector is booming. Our TV and film sector is booming. When it comes to biotech, we are booming in Ontario. When it comes to digital media, we are booming in Ontario.

There are good reasons for us to be optimistic. I look forward to working with my honourable colleague as we lend shape to the jobs and prosperity council and a new jobs and prosperity fund so that together we can use our

monies, our precious taxpayer dollars, in the smartest ways possible.

## ONTARIO'S CREDIT RATING

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Last week, one rating agency gave Ontario a negative outlook and another actually downgraded Ontario's credit rating. I read that report. Moody's said, "Expense growth targets appear particularly ambitious in light of growth in expenses averaging 7% annually in the five years to 2011-12."

Funny, Minister: That line is almost a direct quote from me, speaking in this House on numerous occasions about the unsustainability of your unchecked spending. Translation: You're making promises you can't keep, and you're writing cheques you can't cash. We've been telling you that very thing for years. Now that Ontario is facing interest hikes that would make your latest budget obsolete, are you finally ready to listen?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite neglected to read down to the next paragraph, where Moody's also said that "Moody's recognizes that the province has laid out an ambitious fiscal plan to return to fiscal balance." He also ignored the parts in Moody's report that said the following: that we have a very high level of debt affordability, a high degree of fiscal flexibility, a large and diversified economy and a broad and productive tax base.

In fact, we have laid out a plan that all three agencies have accepted and acknowledged the difficulties in achieving. They have called on this Legislature to make it work, to work together.

One of the great risks out there, among others, is this Legislature. I ask the member opposite: Do what the third party did. Work with this government to get us back to balance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Yes, you've laid out a plan, and no, we don't believe it. For years, we've been telling you to curb your spending. Months ago, we stood in this House and warned that if you didn't start paying attention, and if you don't get your financial house in order, Ontario will pay a high price for your incompetence.

You didn't listen. You thought you knew better. You have proven that Liberals have great difficulty accepting a simple if-then logic statement. That's why we couldn't have any meaningful discussions with you. Are you now ready to admit that you should have listened to us while you had the chance?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, let me quote a few others from outside of here. Here's a quote: "The key message from the agencies late last year was that they wanted a clear and credible medium-term plan as to how the ... government would balance its finances. And the government did that," said Craig Alexander, chief economist, TD Bank.

Another quote: "We're inclined to view the budget plan and the government's initial progress on the deficit



reduction as sufficient to put off additional negative pressure on the province's credit rating for now." That's Warren Lovely of CIBC World Markets.

Another quote: "McGuinty must not deviate from the path set out in his budget, including curtailing labour costs. For the good of all Ontarians, the opposition ought not to act as stumbling blocks." That is a stumbling block on the other side, Mr. Speaker. They refuse to work with the government. They refuse to co-operate. Later today, the bells will continue to ring, Mr. Speaker. Let's make this minority Parliament work—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. On Friday, the Minister of Finance wrote, "Elizabeth Witmer [is] a great choice for the WSIB. Her legislation ... gave rise to its current structure and name."

But back when that very legislation was proposed, the same minister, the then Liberal labour critic, called it "an attack on working people," "mean-spirited," "kicking sand in the face of working people," and said, "The government ought to withdraw this bill."

Has the minister had a conversion of some sort, or is there something the government wants to explain to us?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd like to again salute Elizabeth Witmer for her outstanding contribution to public life in Ontario for very many years. In fact, the member is not reflecting what I said. What I said, in fact, is accurate, that the name of the WSIB—and by the way, it was designed to move away from a sexually biased name to a more inclusive name. We changed the name and set up the current structure. Unfortunately, it didn't repeal the cuts to benefits that the NDP government had put in four years earlier, including the formula that continued to restrict benefits to those disabled. So you can't have it both ways, I say—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** To quote the Premier from his earlier statement, "The more things change, the more they stay the same around here."

There's no doubt the former member knows the WSIB file, but over here, we have some serious differences of opinion about how to handle it. Injured workers and their families have one important question: Did the Premier appoint Ms. Witmer based on her vision for the WSIB, or are they so desperate for a majority government they're ready to play politics with this appointment?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's unfortunate the member would denigrate a member with an outstanding track record. It really is, to question her integrity. It contradicts what the leader of his party said.

I want to salute Elizabeth Witmer—listen, I disagreed with Elizabeth Witmer on many, many issues, but she has been an outstanding servant of the people of Ontario for more than 30 years. She has served in government, in

opposition, with honesty and integrity and credibility. She brings good reflection on all of us in public life and in this House.

I want to again commend the leader of the third party at least for acknowledging her enormous contributions.

Leave this nonsense at home. I'm delighted she has taken on the job she has. We have a lot of work to do to build on our record to date. I'm glad—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a question today for the Minister of Education. Minister, as you know, bullying is an issue that everyone in this province identifies with. We all know someone in this House who has suffered profound and long-lasting effects as a result of bullying. As parents in the province of Ontario, it's an issue that's especially important to everyone.

That's why I'm so disappointed that Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act, has stalled in second reading debate. The opposition has chosen to continuously delay debate on legislation that's going to help kids in Ontario schools. You're running out of time to have Bill 13 in place in classrooms when kids return to school this September.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What are you doing to make sure that this legislation gets into our schools by September?

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**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'd like to take the opportunity to recognize the former member of Kitchener-Waterloo. She was a strong voice in this House and she was well regarded by all parties for her dedication to the province and to her constituents.

Before she resigned her position she had a private member's bill, Bill 14, that was also on anti-bullying efforts. Like Mrs. Witmer, the government believes in putting kids first. That's why I worked hard with Mrs. Witmer to incorporate the best ideas from Bill 14 into Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act. Late last week, on the John Tory show on Friday, Mrs. Witmer acknowledged this work. She talked about the Accepting Schools Act, Bill 13—that it would be amended to include Bill 14. She said that she was confident Ontario would pass strong anti-bullying legislation.

I'm calling on the members opposite to work with us, to move Bill 13 out of second reading debate so that the legislation can be amended and passed in time so that it can be in schools this September.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you, Minister. It's a pleasure to hear that there is some collaboration that is taking place on this issue.

My own constituents have clearly expressed to me that they expect to see this government put aside politics when the well-being of our kids is at stake. One of my constituents sent this message to me. It said, "Bullying is

a big problem in schools, and there is no room for partisan politics on this" issue.

I couldn't agree more, Speaker, and that's why I have another question for the minister. What are the next steps for Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act, to get it into our schools for this September?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I know that the member has been present during much of the debate on the Accepting Schools Act. That's because we've had a lot of debate on the Accepting Schools Act. It has been debated for second reading for almost 17 hours, but the PC Party has chosen to delay the debate 10 times; 10 times we have listened to the bells ring instead of moving this bill to committee so that we can focus on the best interests of our kids. We can move amendments to Bill 13 once we get to committee.

There are good ideas in Bill 14. I reiterate my commitment to make this bill the strongest bill possible, but we cannot take those steps as a Legislature unless we stop the game-playing, we stop the bell-ringing and we get Bill 13 to committee.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** To the Minister of Health: Despite promises for strengthened accountability, oversight and transparency at Ornge, the Minister of Health continues to defend this organization. Can the minister explain why, in her new legislation that she puts forward as this new strengthening of accountability and giving of transparency, she is shutting out the Ombudsman from investigating Ornge and she is protecting them from freedom-of-information requests? I'd like to know from the minister how she qualifies that as transparency.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This legislation, Bill 50, that I have introduced, does complete the job of responding to the Auditor General's recommendations. It protects whistle-blowers. It allows the government to change the performance agreement at any time. It allows us to put in a supervisor or an investigator—a right we have in hospitals but did not have in Ornge.

This is important legislation, and I'm asking the member opposite, if he really wants strengthened oversight at Ornge, then quit the games that you're playing. Let's get to work; let's get this bill to committee. But we can't get this bill to committee because you insist on ringing the bells every day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, we'll continue to ring the bells until she wakes up.

What I want to know from this minister is why she considers giving the Ombudsman access to Ornge playing games? I'd like to know why she thinks giving access to freedom-of-information requests is playing games. I want to know from this minister why she and her government continue to ring this organization with defence rather than insisting that we have full scrutiny of everything that's going on there. Why?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Minister of Health?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I want to tell the member opposite that we are open to suggestions from opposition to make this legislation stronger.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I say, we are open to amendments, but we have to get it past second reading first before we can have that important conversation at committee. The members opposite are obstructing the work of the Legislature. They insist on ringing the bells; we want to get to work. We've got important work to do at Ornge and in other parts of government, but as long as they continue to obstruct progress in this Legislature, we're going to have a very difficult time getting our work done.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Last week, we learned that the Premier's former chief of staff and current campaign manager, Don Guy, billed Ornge for \$125,000 for "professional services." When did the Premier first learn that his campaign strategist, Don Guy, was working for Ornge?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think members of the House are aware, but I think, once in a while, it's important to remind members that the public accounts committee, a standing committee of this Legislature, is seized with the Ornge issue. I checked this morning: The public accounts committee, on this issue alone, has sat for over 15 hours, and 22 witnesses have appeared so far.

They have a robust list of witnesses appearing this week, which includes Patricia Volker, board member of Ornge; David Caplan, a former Minister of Health and of course a former member of this Legislature; Kelly Mitchell, a former Ornge lobbyist and a prominent Conservative; Flavio Volpe, former chief of staff to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade; Steve Farquhar, VP operations of Ornge; the chief accountant for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; and Mr. Guy himself will also be present there. It's an opportunity to ask questions such as the ones raised today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have no idea what that had to do with my question, but back to the Premier: The Premier knows Don Guy very well. The two have been described in newspaper articles as being "joined at the hip." Some say that despite leaving the Premier's office, Mr. Guy still has a say in how the Premier's office is run. Mr. Guy's last bill of \$17,000 was to one of Ornge's for-profit companies. That was on December 17, 2011, right when Ornge's high-flying executives started making the front page of the papers. Mr. Guy did not take the cash. Was it because the Liberal Party's campaign chair knew



this government was doing something they shouldn't be doing?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I don't think any member of this House appreciates these sorts of drive-by smears. The fact of the matter is, the public accounts committee is seized with this matter. It's a standing committee of this Legislature. The Auditor General reports to the Legislature through the public accounts committee. They're in the process of examining the Ornge situation. There is a long list of witnesses who are appearing, including Don Guy, who will be appearing Wednesday, and there will be an opportunity for members of this Legislature to ask questions, to continue their investigation into Ornge, something which complements the work that's been done by the Auditor General, which complements the good measures that have been taken by the Minister of Health.

I would also remind members that we have a piece of legislation before this House, which, if it finally ever did make it through second reading to committee, would be another opportunity to take a look at the Ornge situation.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. David Zimmer:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. For the past several weeks I've been sitting on public accounts, dealing with the Ornge business. Seven years ago, Ornge was created after a previous Auditor General's report said there were problems with Ontario's air ambulance. It wasn't serving Ontarians effectively. The then Auditor General said that a central coordinating agency was needed to improve air ambulance service in Ontario. That's why Ornge was created.

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Sadly, Speaker, and troubling, significant issues arose on the watch of the former leadership of Ornge. The CEO and the board of directors let Ontarians down. They created a complex web of private companies, they avoided credibility, and they enriched themselves.

What are you doing to right the ship at Ornge? Are those reforms going to take root?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Willowdale for—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member for Lanark.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lanark is now warned.

Minister.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the member for the question and also for his excellent work at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

We have taken concrete and substantive actions to address issues at Ornge. We now have a stronger performance agreement in place. We have a new board of directors, new senior leadership, and the OPP has been called in. The private entities that Ornge's former leader-

ship had created are being wound down, and Ornge is now focusing on providing quality air ambulance service to the people of Ontario.

And I have introduced Bill 50, Speaker. I had an opportunity to speak to that last week. Not only is the official opposition going to block the legislation, they say they're going to vote against Bill 50.

This side of the House is focused on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Speaker, Ontarians entrust government with the responsibility of governing. Ornge was created to improve air ambulance services in Ontario, and there is a role for all members of this Legislature to be a part of that solution and those reforms, whether they're Liberals, Progressive Conservatives or NDPers. This includes work by all party members on committees and on debates, especially on the committee work. This means working together on government legislation to improve accountability and transparency at Ornge.

Minister, what can we do as legislators, whether we're Liberals, Conservatives, or NDPers, to help you reform Ornge?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thanks for the question. There is, unfortunately, a trend emerging from the opposition. It is clear that they were absent without leadership on the budget, Speaker, and it is now clear that they are absent without leadership on legislation. They are playing games with—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to take this moment to remind the members, when answering questions, we're doing so on government policy.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We have introduced new legislation that will bring enhanced transparency and enhanced accountability to Ornge.

The members opposite have chosen to ring the bells. They have chosen to play political games, Speaker. We've got work to do, and we need some co-operation from the party opposite to get the work done.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My question is for the Premier. Today, Premier, you're closing slots at Fort Erie, the slots at Hiawatha and at Windsor Raceway, mothballing hundreds of jobs and putting families into distress.

Earlier this month, the MPP from Niagara Falls was to hand-deliver to you a proposal on behalf of the town of Fort Erie and the Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium. These organizations want to take over and operate the slots facility instead of closing it, saving approximately 300 jobs at Fort Erie's largest employer.

Premier, did Kim Craiton even bother showing you the proposal? Did you consider it? And why will you not give the private sector a chance?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A reminder for everyone, including those who use first names or whatever, that we refer to everyone by their title or by their seat.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period, the opposition said we should follow Drummond. We are closing those slots, getting rid of it. That was one of Drummond's recommendations. You can't have it both ways. You can't say, "Do Drummond" and do as the Conservative finance critic did and call the Drummond report a sham the day it was introduced.

There are difficult choices to be made. The \$345-million-a-year subsidy to horse racing across Ontario is not a good use of public tax dollars, Mr. Speaker. It is the right move to make. Our priorities remain health care and education. We are going to move forward on those files as we move back to balance.

Mr. Speaker, these choices are difficult, but they're important for a better future for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the Premier: Your recent budget will single-handedly close the slots at the Fort Erie Race Track, putting 300 people out of work and closing the single largest employer in Fort Erie; likewise in Sarnia, another 140 jobs out the door, and 210 more in Windsor, all with the passing of your budget—over 500 families thrown into disruption and chaos, joining the over 600,000 Ontario men and women already out of work in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

Premier, why did you force your MPPs from Windsor West and Niagara Falls to vote against their constituents and vote against keeping jobs in their communities by forcing them to support your job-killing budget?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, the member for Niagara Falls met with both the Premier and I with respect to that proposal, so the premise of your question is wrong. In fact, this government's priorities remain the economy, health care and education.

The member opposite voted against his constituents when he voted against the southwestern Ontario economic development fund. We choose to invest in health care: in Windsor, Sarnia and Fort Erie, more than 80 new doctors in eight years—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is now warned.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** —since 2003, 375 new teachers in Windsor, 201 in Sarnia, 382 in Fort Erie. Health care and education are the priorities. It's a difficult choice, Mr. Speaker. You can't continue to subsidize the international horse racing industry.

## PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the finance minister. The budget bill sets out a rather disturbing process that screams Ornge all over again. The bill will establish a legal framework for the privatization of ServiceOntario, a framework that would allow an unaccountable, privatized, public-private system which the minister can hide behind.

In light of the disturbing abuses of public funds and the complete lack of transparency at Ornge in the fiasco, why is this minister, this government, heading down the same path with ServiceOntario as it did with Ornge?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** In fact, Mr. Speaker, this initiative actually goes back to the 2011 budget. We began that to look at the best possible service delivery for Ontarians. We want to build on our success. Remember the 30 days or it's free on birth certificates, which we've done.

We took ServiceOntario, put it into one unit and increased efficiency—almost doubled efficiency. We looked at it more carefully, and like jurisdictions around the world, we're moving to an alternate financing proposal to see what can happen.

The member is not accurate when he says the bill contemplates an identical situation to Ornge. That's simply factually not correct. Those decisions haven't been taken, and we look forward to working with the third party to implement this.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, the new piece of legislation opens the door to privatization of ServiceOntario and any other services provided by the Ministry of Government Services. Despite the comments from the government that letting Ornge go down this path was a big mistake, it seems perfectly willing to replicate it. The bill allows the government to enter into service agreements with any—I repeat, Speaker, any—corporation to provide public services, and allows for-profit partnerships.

Can the minister explain why he introduced legislation that replicates many of the failures of the Ornge legal framework?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's all about improving the quality of service to Ontarians. You know, the ServiceOntario offices that are open around the province—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is now warned.

Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Speaker, the ServiceOntario offices that are around the province are serving people well. We still have more to do. For instance, there are still a number of services—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Attorney General will come to order.

1140

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** There are still a number of services that could be offered online that are not being offered online. There's an investment of some \$1.3 billion in order to purchase the needed computer equipment. We'd like to work with the private sector to bring those services online, to bring that technology online. That will help improve service for average Ontarians and reduce wait times for things like birth certificates and health cards. We think it's the right direction to go in and a very affordable way to do it.



## HOME CARE

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. The seniors I talk to in Pickering–Scarborough East tell me that they want our government to do everything we possibly can to help them stay in their homes for as long as possible. I am pleased that Bill 2, the healthy homes tax credit, is a bill that helps do just that. This bill will provide a tax credit of up to \$1,500 a year to eligible seniors, as well as their caregivers, who make necessary retrofits to keep seniors at home longer.

Unfortunately, while sitting as a committee member on the Standing Committee for Finance and Economic Affairs just last Thursday, I witnessed first-hand how the PCs are using delay tactics to stop Bill 2 from moving forward. Speaker, while I understand that we may not always agree, this should not stop us from implementing important bills. Can the Minister of Finance please explain why we need to pass Bill 2?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, when you listen to those bells ringing, we're reminded that the bill will keep seniors safer in their homes longer. When those bells ring, we're reminded that our desire to relieve the pressure on long-term-care costs gets longer and the wait time longer. Every time those bells ring, the opposition is trying to prevent the creation of 10,500 jobs that would result from this legislation. When they ring the bells, they are deliberately undermining our ability to support almost \$800 million in home renovation activity.

The Conservatives are absent without leadership. They're blocking important legislation that will serve our seniors—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you, Minister. I ran to become an MPP because I wanted to help implement good public policy, and this bill helps Ontario seniors make a better place to live, work and retire. I can't comprehend why the PCs are stalling on this. It's unfortunate that it's only the Liberals and the NDP who find the strategy of ringing bells offensive.

However, during committee last Thursday, I sat across from your critic, who also sounded frustrated and acknowledged that delaying procedures—and I quote from the member for Thornhill: "Every single piece of legislation that's out there has been delayed. Nothing has come back to the House since we were elected last October 6. I'm not happy about that nor am I proud...." I'm glad to hear that.

Can the minister please further explain to the House why we need to work together to support Bill 2 to happen?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I thank the member for her question and for her hard work in trying to get Bill 2 passed.

Here's what others say about the healthy homes renovation tax credit:

"Policies such as that would make it easier for seniors to remain at home." That's from Susan Eng, the vice-

president of CARP. Every time the bells ring, the Tories are telling her, "We don't care what you say."

Paul Golini, the chairman of the Building Industry and Land Development Association, says:

"Residential renovation is essential to our region's economic stability and prosperity because it creates jobs while improving the existing housing stock for years to come ... 165,800 jobs in new home construction and renovation in 2011, making it one of the largest employers in the region."

The Tories are telling him and his organization, "We don't care what you say."

Mr. Speaker, we want to get this bill passed. It's about better lives for our seniors. It's about making this Legislature work. The Tories are absent without leadership. We'll stand with Ontarians to pass—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. Ontario needs a real strategy for jobs and growth. Small business owners want to do their part, but often they can't, all because of provincial red tape.

My constituents Alan Mailloux and Barbara McMahon know all about that. They operate the Downie Street Bakehouse in Stratford. They invested good money in high-quality used ovens. Their ovens are safe, in everyone's opinion—except the TSSA, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. To get their oven certified for use, the TSSA made a host of—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Peterborough is now warned.

Carry on.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** To get their oven certified for use, the TSSA made a host of unreasonable demands. They even demanded that someone from the oven's American manufacturer come up to Stratford and inspect the ovens—all at the Mailloux's expense.

My question is this: Does that seem reasonable to the minister, or is it just more Liberal red tape?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, first let me assure the member opposite that public safety is, indeed, the government's first priority—a very important concern for the government of the province of Ontario.

The Technical Standards and Safety Authority, TSSA, administers the Technical Standards and Safety Act and its regulations on behalf of the government. In 2009, the act was amended to strengthen the accountability and transparency of the TSSA by providing the minister with the power to appoint the chair and vice-chair of the TSSA board of directors, establishing a legislative authority to guide the focus of the TSSA—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Mr. Speaker, the minister is accountable for the TSSA. That's why I wrote her on behalf of the Downie Street Bakehouse. That was a month ago, and I've yet to see her response. This isn't about safety. Alan and Barbara spent a lot of time and energy following the TSSA process to have their ovens certified for use. But the TSSA's demands were unreasonable and excessive. They left Alan and Barbara with no choice but to go \$20,000 in debt just to buy new, lower-grade ovens. That's unacceptable to Alan and Barbara and to me.

My question to the minister: Can she name even one regulation that the McGuinty government has eliminated which actually made it easier to run a small business in Ontario?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the member opposite how important it is to the province of Ontario and to this government to have all the small businesses in the province operating as efficiently and effectively as possible.

This is a very specific issue and a very specific case that the member opposite brings to my attention. I certainly would look into this particular issue if he brings it to my attention. I undertake to further follow up with the member on it.

While I cannot address specific cases, I certainly can look into the issue that the member raises, and I can assure the member how important it is for the businesses to continue—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

## PEST CONTROL

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Early last year, the McGuinty government, with a great deal of fanfare, announced \$5 million to tackle the spread of bedbugs. Now the government has quietly ended this program and also—quite frankly, shamefully—cancelled the community start-up and maintenance benefit, which helped people living on social assistance pay the cost of replacing bedbug-infested mattresses and furniture.

Do these cuts mean the McGuinty government thinks that the bedbug crisis has been solved?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me start by saying I can only imagine what it would be like to live with an infestation of bedbugs, Speaker. No one should have to live with that, and that is why last year, we provided one-time funding—extraordinary one-time funding—of \$5 million to help our public health units deal with this issue. I want to say thank you to the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, who worked very hard to raise this issue and to actually drive this change.

We have offered Toronto Public Health an additional three nurses to handle the bedbug issues. Unfortunately, Speaker, that money has not flowed because they have not added additional nurses. I want to reiterate that that money is available. It is ready to flow if and when they add those additional nurses.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** That's not what we're hearing from the Metro Toronto federation of tenants or from the local health units. They're hearing that they need the money, and they need it now. Ontario families continue to struggle with this problem of bedbugs everywhere, not just in Toronto: its health effects, ruined furniture, and unaffordable for most people pest removal costs.

Meanwhile, the McGuinty government is abandoning support for effective local public health programs that help people deal with bedbugs; this is what they're telling us.

I would ask the health minister to direct her opinions and her comments to those who need it most, those people who are struggling with bedbugs. I would welcome her at any time; we have many apartments in Parkdale that struggle with this problem too. She could stay for a night and find out what it's like.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, as I said, last year we were in a position to flow \$5 million to public health units; \$1.2 million of that did go to Toronto Public Health. We've also offered funding for new nurses, if and when Toronto Public Health adds nurses to their complement.

I want to work together. I want to work with the member opposite to find a solution. The city of Toronto is, of course, running a substantial surplus this year. We, sadly, are not in that position. We will work together, though, for the benefit of the people who are fighting this infestation.

## WATER QUALITY

**Ms. Soo Wong:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Clean water is crucial for our well-being. Conserving our water supplies and protecting our water quality are essential to ensuring the health of our families, our communities and our economy.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of the Environment: Please explain to us what Ontario is doing to promote innovation and growth of our water sector and encourage conservation.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** First of all, it's an excellent question. As members of the House may know, through the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act—a key part of our Open Ontario plan—we are driving innovation, creating economic opportunities and promoting water conservation. I think the Conservatives voted against that act.

Innovative Ontario companies are already leading the way, employing 22,000 people in the clean water sector. We want to help foster new and innovative water technologies, services and practices, and encourage people to use water more efficiently. The 2011 Ontario budget outlined the water strategy and announced funding of \$30 million over three years for community demonstration programs, municipal water sustainability planning, and to support education and public awareness of water conservation. This is real progress.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1152 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I just want to introduce Crystal Lee, who's here visiting from Toronto—actually, Toronto—Danforth—just to see the Legislature in action.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Introduction of guests? Members' statements? The member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Thank you. I attended an event this afternoon with Playworks, and I was very impressed that Mayor Dave Ryan was there as well as Mayor Pat Perkins—Mayor Dave Ryan of Pickering and Pat Perkins of Whitby. Thank you for the work you do with our youth in the community.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That was an introduction.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We'll reset the clock. That was an introduction.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FALUN DAFU

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for getting that so nice and clear as well.

It's my pleasure and I'm proud today to congratulate practitioners of Falun Dafa worldwide. On May 13, 2012, it will be the 20th anniversary of Falun Dafa's introduction to the public by Mr. Li Hongzhi.

When Mr. Li Hongzhi introduced Falun Dafa, his intent was to encourage people to be truthful, compassionate and forbearing. Members of the Falun Dafa community hold these truths dear.

Regrettably, not everyone in the world follows these principles. Members of the Falun Dafa have been subject to extreme persecution, with their life, liberty and property taken from them immorally.

Around the world, the Communist Chinese government has engaged in a systematic campaign of oppression and suppression. Apparatchiks of the Communist state are not confined to the PRC. They have even forced documentaries off the air here in Canada on CBC.

Members of the Falun Dafa community have been subject to arbitrary arrests, imprisonment, torture, organ harvesting and psychiatric abuse and execution.

I, for one, am thankful for my friends in the Falun Dafa, and I'm glad they do not receive that persecution here in Ontario.

I invite all members of the House to attend the Falun Dafa Association of Canada's celebration on May 5 in Nathan Phillips Square at 11:30 a.m. here in Toronto.

## NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Today, I want to use my time to reflect on April 28, the National Day of Mourning for persons killed, injured or made sick by the workplace.

Today, the commemoration of this date has spread to more than 80 countries around the world. In 2001, the International Labour Organization observed it as World Day for Safety and Health at Work.

Make no doubt that this is a global movement now. Let's consider some key facts, as disturbing as they are.

On average, nearly four workers are killed in Canada on every working day; about a million more are injured every year. For every 16 workers in Canada, one of them will suffer an injury while at the workplace. Younger workers between the ages of 15 to 29 are at the highest risk.

Now, just imagine all of this happening in the world, including Canada: One person is killed on the job every 30 seconds. That means that by the time I'm done speaking, we will have lost another four people because of unsafe working conditions. This is an intolerable fact.

The government continues to dole out corporate tax cuts and asks nothing in return: no guarantee of jobs; no commitment of health and safety. Simply put, the relationship between people, government and business has come to be one-sided. It is no wonder that organized labour is coming under increasing attack.

## PICKERING SOCCER CLUB

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge and applaud the Pickering Soccer Club and club head coach Tony La Ferrara for their exceptional support in helping put an end to bullying in our schools and our communities.

I had the pleasure of participating in their campaign kickoff just this last Friday, along with my colleague from Ajax-Pickering. It was a great success.

I'm pleased to be joined today in the House by Mayor David Ryan and members Gino Sgovio and Franco Taverna from the Pickering Soccer Club. So I welcome them.

While officiating weekly games on the soccer field throughout the city of Pickering this season, the referees wore a vest with the Stop Bullying Now logo clearly displayed to all spectators and players. This unique initiative has never been done before by any sports organization in Canada. Their important message will reach thousands of parents, players and community members over the course of the summer and is sure to be something to generate discussion and healthy dialogue between children and their parents.

I want to congratulate the Pickering Soccer Club for taking a major leadership role in helping make our kids

feel safe and comfortable in our shared community. Welcome, folks, and thank you, Speaker.

### ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Last Thursday, I had the honour to represent the Legislature at a touching ceremony in Minden in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Under the Highway Memorials for Fallen Police Officers Act, three area bridges were dedicated to the memory of three local Ontario Provincial Police officers who gave their lives in the line of duty. These dedications were made in co-operation with the families of the deceased officers.

On December 11, 1968, Corporal James Smith and Detective Sergeant Lorne J. Chapitis were responding to a desperate call from a woman and her child who were being threatened by her husband. The officers approached the suspect and attempted to negotiate with him. Despite being unarmed, both officers were shot and killed by a high-powered rifle.

On July 3, 1993, Constable Richard Eric Nystedt was investigating another domestic dispute when the suspect attempted to escape into the woods. While pursuing the suspect, Officer Nystedt was stabbed from behind and bled to death before he could reach help.

I mentioned at the ceremony on Thursday that my father, Bill Scott, was the city federal member of Parliament when all three of these officers lost their lives in the line of duty. I remember the sadness we felt as a family and as a close community to all of those incidents.

The dedication at the three bridges will be a lasting reminder to the families of these men of the gratitude of the people of Ontario for the sacrifice they made. We are forever grateful to them.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yet again, another example of how the McGuinty government is deciding they're going to, as my friend says, whack northern Ontario.

We first saw it with their inactions and their feeble attempts to deal with the downfall of the forest industry, making a bad situation worse. Then we see them, on a whole bunch of other things, essentially groping around and trying to figure out how to respond to the issues in northern Ontario. Now it's the ONTC.

All of us were back in our ridings this weekend, and it's just palpable the anger that people have towards this government. I went to the 80th anniversary of the Croatian Hall in Schumacher, I went to the Day of Mourning, I went to a number of other events in the city of Timmins on the weekend, and just everywhere you went it was like, "Why is Dalton McGuinty doing it again?" And I have to say to them, "I really don't know."

"Why is it okay," people ask, "that you're able to provide an infrastructure in southern Ontario and, yes,

subsidize it by way of GO Transit, by way of other means of transportation, but you can't do it in northern Ontario?" And then we have cabinet ministers, as we hear now, who say that it's \$400 versus whatever. Well, you know what? It costs 10 times more to provide ambulance service in northern Ontario. It costs more money to run schools, it costs more money to run hospitals, but we do it. Why? Because it's part of the basic infrastructure that people are entitled to.

So when we hear cabinet ministers talk about, "You can't compare it to southern Ontario, because a subsidy in the south is not good in the north," we just wonder where this government is coming from.

### WOODBINE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** I use this opportunity to welcome the Woodbine Entertainment Group, who have come to Queen's Park and will be in committee room 2 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., including an invitation to meet the legendary jockey Sandy Hawley.

Speaker, as you'll know, Woodbine Entertainment has been a strong business and community partner in my riding, and their operations have, of course, made significant contributions to the government. OLG slots at Woodbine and Mohawk generate over \$500 million annually for the government. It's the number one lottery retailer in Ontario, the largest racetrack operator in Canada, and the engine that drives horse racing. It's a highly regarded member of the international racing community. It directly employs 2,300 individuals and another 3,000 individuals work in the back stretches at their racetracks.

It's been a strong community partner focusing on health care and youth, has donated approximately \$6 million to community organizations, and their leadership has made a great deal of difference for the young folks in my riding. They've set up scholarships, summer camps, riding programs for the disabled and support for local women's shelters. Last year, Woodbine employees spent almost 950 hours volunteering in the community.

### 1310

The Rexdale community has very much benefited by their presence. Woodbine has invested over \$375 million in racetrack and slot facilities. It actually hosts annually more folks than the Air Canada Centre or the Rogers Centre: seven million visitors annually.

I certainly support a new casino in Toronto at Woodbine, and welcome them today.

### ONTARIO'S CREDIT RATING

**Mr. Todd Smith:** This is a very important issue in my community and many others. We're facing a serious debt and deficit crisis in the province of Ontario. Our party has been warning the government for months to get its house in order. We warned that the budget wasn't doing enough to meet Ontario's debt and deficit challenges. We warned that equivocating on a wage freeze, as the



government has, would be met with skepticism by the private sector.

Well, we got that private sector response loud and clear from Standard and Poor's and Moody's last week. In their review of Ontario's credit outlook, S&P said, "We believe the province's main credit challenges include its ... weak budgetary and debt metrics...."

Was the finance minister even humbled by this news of last week? No, he wasn't. He said that he welcomed the news, of all things.

Under the finance minister's watch, the deficit is 22% of operating revenues. The debt is 235% of revenues. He's responsible for managing Ontario's books. The finance minister, and the Premier this morning in question period too, seemed to be daring the credit agencies to further downgrade Ontario's debt and put the finances of the province into even worse shape.

Mr. Speaker, imagine you're a family with an income of about \$50,000, like many in Prince Edward-Hastings. If you were the province of Ontario, you'd be \$117,000 in debt today. You'd have to pay \$11,000 in interest every year on that debt, and your current spending patterns would mean that, in two years, you'd be \$140,000 in debt. Welcome to McGuinty and Duncan's Ontario.

#### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Mr. Speaker, our government understands that education is the key to building a stronger economy for our sons and daughters.

In order to grow and learn, our children have to feel safe going to school every day. That's why I'm proud to support Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act. We're doing more than just telling bullied kids that it gets better; we're working together to make it better now. For the first time ever, we're defining bullying in legislation so that every student, teacher, principle and parent knows what we're talking about when we say that bullying is not okay in our schools.

The McGuinty government knows it's incumbent on each and every one of us inside the Legislature on both sides of the aisle and across the province to make sure that every Ontario student feels safe, included and welcome in our schools. We're all committed to making things better for our children.

That's why it's vital that Bill 13 is passed quickly so that new protections to prevent bullying and protect kids from homophobia can get in schools in time for September. I call upon the official opposition to stop delaying the passage of this important legislation. Let's work together to make sure kids who are being bullied get the help that they need.

#### ELIZABETH WITMER

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** In a political life, you meet thousands of people, and over a political lifetime, you may be lucky enough to develop a friendship with a very excep-

tional person who has inspired everyone around her with her passionate commitment to public service. Such a person is our colleague Elizabeth Witmer. I know I speak for her friends on all sides of the House when I say thank you to Elizabeth and wish her well as she assumes her new leadership responsibilities as chair of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

Last week, Elizabeth put her family first and decided that after 32 consecutive years serving the people of Ontario in elected office, the time had come for her to retire from the Legislature. What a career she's had here: Deputy Premier, Minister of Health, Education, Environment and Labour—all the easy ones, as she once said. In opposition: deputy leader, House leader, caucus chair and critic of some of those same important responsibilities—all this after a decade on the Waterloo public school board, and half that time as board chair.

She was always a political trailblazer, demonstrating women are, in every measure, the equal of men when it comes to political leadership. She also leads this place having made Ontario history as the longest-serving woman MPP ever with an elegance, class and style rarely seen in politics.

Once recognized in the Toronto Star as the hardest-working MPP in the House, her work was also defined by her compassion for people and a practical, collaborative approach to getting things done. She would work across party lines and never let partisanship get in the way of accomplishing her goals and those of her community. She was never defined by her party, but, at its best, our party was defined by her.

She accomplished big things for Waterloo region, like the hospital improvements and support for the universities and college expansions, but she was never too busy to help anyone she could with their individual issues and problems. I think of the McFadyen family and their little son Isaac, who needed life-saving medication, and what she did to convince the government to do the right thing; and the way she championed the free flu shot, which has saved literally thousands of lives since she introduced it a decade ago; and the work she did with the registered nurses and all the health stakeholder groups whom she enjoyed working with so much.

The circumstances of her departure meant she was unable to say goodbye to us here in this chamber, but I know she would want me to extend her warmest wishes to everyone here: the staff of the Legislature, members of all three caucuses, everyone.

Having been privileged to serve with Elizabeth for the past 22 years, I've come to know her family, and I know how proud they are of all she has done. As a friend, I'm saddened by her departure, but I know that all of us here who admired her and the way she served Ontario are ready to accept the torch that she passes to us.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member for that statement, and I thank all members for their statements. I also did take an opportunity to send an email personally to Ms. Witmer.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I beg leave to present the first report 2012 from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Tabuns presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a short statement?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Just my thanks to the committee for the work they did on going through this material, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Tabuns moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** No—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh, you did not do that. That's fine. No further action is required, then. Thank you.

Reports by committees?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Let's stop for a moment. The member does need to move adjournment of the debate.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I so move.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Tabuns has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

#### (FAIRNESS FOR EMPLOYEES), 2012 LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL (ÉQUITÉ À L'ÉGARD DES EMPLOYÉS)

Mr. Natyshak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 77, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to enhancing fairness for employees / Projet de loi 77, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail en vue d'accroître l'équité à l'égard des employés.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** What this bill is about is very simple. We need a level playing field when it comes to

labour relations in this province. Every Ontario worker deserves to be able to exercise their democratic rights without fear of reprisal, but current labour laws allow employers to bully, intimidate and fire employees without impunity. With the present labour laws, there's no such thing as workplace democracy in Ontario. We desperately need to bring balance back to Ontario's Labour Relations Act and give vulnerable workers the tools to lift themselves out of poverty.

1320

Bringing fairness to the workplace is a big task, Mr. Speaker. What we have tried to do with the Fairness for Employees Act is to take a few modest, uncontroversial reforms that we think can easily be implemented with support from all parties and all parts of the labour movement and hopefully, the employer community as well. I urge everyone in the House to vote for this very practical, doable, modest set of reforms.

## PETITIONS

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's my pleasure to read a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have" had their homes bought out to silence them;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science"—not politics—"and local planning."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to Dia, one of the pages here in her last week.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the good people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:



"Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

"Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently don't complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

"Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes. We need accountability, transparency and consistency in our long-term-care home system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman's mandate to include Ontario's long-term-care homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors."

### MARKDALE HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Grey Bruce Health Services' Markdale hospital is the only health care facility between Owen Sound and Orangeville on the Highway 10 corridor;

"Whereas the community of Markdale rallied to raise \$13 million on the promise they would get a new state-of-the-art hospital in Markdale;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announce as soon as possible its intended construction date for the new Markdale hospital and ensure that the care needs of the patients and families of our community are met in a timely manner."

I support this petition. I'll affix my name and I will send it with Ranbir to the clerks' table. Thank you.

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately."

I fully agree. I've signed this petition and will send it down with Talin.

### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by a number of my constituents.

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario's horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

"Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program."

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Noah.

### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas currently the law takes the onus off of owners that raise violent dogs by making it appear that violence is a matter of genetics; and

"Whereas the Dog Owners' Liability Act does not clearly define a pit bull, nor is it enforced equally across the province, as pit bulls are not an acknowledged breed;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Legislative Assembly passes Bill 16, Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, into law."

I couldn't agree more. I will sign this and give this to Manak to be presented to the desk.

### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm hoping that other people have constituents like mine who are interested in presenting views. It's my duty and privilege to present them. It reads as follows:

"Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

"Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and at least a dozen families have" had their homes bought out to silence them;

"Whereas Ontario's Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

"Whereas 80 municipal councils, representing two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science"—not politics—"and local planning."

I'm pleased to sign and support it and present it to Dia, one of the pages here that's here for two more weeks.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Sudbury and Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government" has made PET "whereas a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with" Health Sciences North, "its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine";

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through" Health Sciences North, "thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Vincent to bring it to the Clerk.

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Elgin–Middlesex–London are concerned about the sacrifice of 400 acres of prime agricultural land in the town of Belmont to the development of a solar farm despite the Green Energy Act's

prohibition of building on such high-grade agricultural land;

"Whereas the company First Solar claims their use of such valuable land is justified under the older renewable energy framework that was in place when the company received its OPA contracts;

"Whereas the government has grandfathered the project into the new Green Energy Act, thereby allowing the company to circumvent any municipal opinion and review;

"Whereas the government has effectively allowed this project to use favourable aspects of two separate regulatory frameworks while avoiding aspects of those same frameworks that are meant to protect one of Ontario's most vital finite resources: its world-class agricultural land;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To put a moratorium on the solar development in Belmont until the province decides by which set of regulations First Solar is to abide."

I support this petition, sign it and hand it page Brady.

1330

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers have been paying over millions in extra charges on their hydro bills to help retire the debt. The amount collected to date as per the Auditor General's report is \$8.7 billion, but the amount owing was \$7.8 billion;

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers are asking, where is the money being invested?

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers are asking why this was not addressed at the time the debt was paid;

"Whereas electrical rates have increased with the new creation of green energy coming online to include solar and wind, refurbishment of nuclear plants and deregulation of Hydro One;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows to obtain answers to the following questions:

"How much of the debt remains?

"When will it be eliminated from Ontario taxpayers' hydro bills?"

I fully support this petition, and I will be presenting it to page Manak to bring it to the Chair.

#### MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas currently the chair of the regional municipality of York is not an elected official and is appointed;

"Whereas currently the population of the regional municipality of York is approximately one million and forecasted to reach 1.5 million within the next 20 years;



“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To support private member’s Bill 60, brought forward by Reza Moridi, MPP for Richmond Hill, which would amend the Municipal Act, 2001 to provide that the head of council of the regional municipality of York must be elected and may not be appointed.”

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence confirming industrial wind development has serious adverse effects on host communities;

“Whereas over 135 people in Ontario have reported serious negative health effects from industrial wind development, and” dozens of families “have been bought out of their homes;

“Whereas Ontario’s Green Energy Act has ended local planning control by stripping municipal councils of their rights;

“Whereas 80 municipal councils” and growing, representing more than “two million Ontarians, called on the government to put in place a full moratorium on industrial wind development until an independent epidemiological health study is completed, proper environmental regulations and protections are put in place, and local democracy is restored;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately put a moratorium on all industrial wind proposals; fund an independent epidemiological health study to develop safe setbacks; legislate those findings; develop stringent environmental protection standards for natural areas; and require all projects to comply with regulations based on science and local planning.”

I agree with this petition and will send it to the table with Noah.

#### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J’ai une pétition qui a été signée par des francophones de partout en Ontario :

« Attendu que la mission du commissaire aux services en français est de veiller à ce que la population reçoive en français des services de qualité du gouvernement de l’Ontario et de surveiller l’application de la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que le commissaire a le mandat de mener des enquêtes indépendantes selon la Loi sur les services en français;

« Attendu que contrairement au vérificateur général, à l’ombudsman, au commissaire à l’environnement et au commissaire à l’intégrité qui, eux, relèvent de l’Assemblée législative, le commissaire aux services en français relève de la ministre déléguée aux services en français;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario de changer les pouvoirs du commissaire aux services en français afin qu’il relève directement de l’Assemblée législative. »

Je suis en faveur de cette pétition, monsieur le Président. Je vais la signer et demander à page Vincent de l’amener à la table des greffiers.

#### CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I’ve got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the operation of cellular commercial transmission equipment on new or existing cell towers has been proposed near residential areas in Oakville and other communities around the province; and

“Whereas Industry Canada has ultimate authority to approve the location of cellular communications transmission equipment under the federal Radiocommunication Act;

“Whereas the province of Ontario has no jurisdiction in the placement of cell communications equipment or services; and

“Whereas many area residents and local elected officials have expressed concerns with the location due to its proximity to residential areas;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada review the siting of cellular commercial communications transmission equipment in residential areas; and

“That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada place a moratorium on the installation of cellular commercial communication transmission equipment on new or existing towers within 1,000 metres of residential homes until an improved separation distance is established by the federal government.”

I agree with this petition, Speaker, and will sign it and send it down with Gillian.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Bill Walker:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the horse racing industry employs approximately 60,000 people, creates \$1.5 billion in wages and \$2 billion in recurring expenditures annually; and

“Whereas the partnership that was created between government and the horse breeding and racing industry has been a model arrangement and is heralded throughout North America, with 75% of revenues going to the provincial government to fund important programs like health care and education, 5% to the municipalities and only 20% goes back to the horse business; and

“Whereas the horse business is a significant source of revenue for the farming community and rural municipalities;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ministry of Finance continue the revenue-sharing partnership with the horse racing industry for the benefit of Ontario's agricultural and rural economies."

I support this petition. I'll sign my name to it and I will send it with page Georgia to the table.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT (AIR AMBULANCES), 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES (SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 25, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm advised that when we last debated second reading of Bill 50, the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound had the floor. He still has some time on the clock. I recognize the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Speaker. I'll start off where I left off. Again, I just want to suggest that Bill 50 is nothing more than the McGuinty government's attempt to divert attention away from its failure to take action against Ornge, despite repeated warnings of financial irregularities, bloated executive salaries, operational deficiencies and, worst of all, compromising patient care. The Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance and the Premier blindly defended an organization that was siphoning scarce health care dollars into a web of for-profit companies when questions were first raised here in this Legislature in April of last year.

Speaker, we don't need more regulation and legislation. What we need is competent and responsible leadership. Both have been found wanting on the part of the Minister of Health and those responsible for oversight of our province's air ambulance. The question we ask on behalf of Ontarians is: What has changed? Why should Ontarians believe that the same individuals who failed in their oversight responsibilities and allowed millions of scarce health care dollars to be wasted will do anything different? A piece of paper, a regulation, a legislation is not what's needed, Speaker; it's a change of approach. Certainly we have no confidence that this new layer of legislation will do anything to restore confidence in what is an essential emergency health care service. Only competent leadership can bring about that confidence. By bringing forward this meaningless bill and boasting that this will bring about the changes necessary to restore that confidence only confirms to us that the minister does not

grasp the depth of the issues that are at the core of the problems at Ornge and that she and her government are more concerned about self-preservation than ensuring the integrity of one of our essential health care services.

The bill's single biggest weakness is the so-called whistle-blower protection section, which fails to protect some of the very people who are in the best position to report fraud, waste, abuse and health and safety violations. Firstly, it fails by not providing across-the-board protection for whistle-blowers. Secondly, it fails by imposing limits on which individuals are protected and who they can approach with information.

So again I ask: Why should we believe anything will change? What is needed is a process that will not only safeguard the whistle-blower but will also instill confidence that their concerns will be taken seriously. The Ombudsman should be engaged to assist in developing that process and should be integral to a formalized whistle-blower reporting process if this is to have any meaningful effect.

I mentioned earlier about confidence. This layer of legislation is what we seem to be getting over and over. We add another rule, another layer of bureaucracy, another layer of wasted time and effort. What we need is significant change. We've had months and months where the minister could have stepped in and done something of a substantive nature to bring this about. By bringing forward this meaningless bill and boasting that this will bring about the changes, the minister just again exemplifies that she has missed the boat on this one. It's too little, too late.

### 1340

We keep hearing all the time, "We have to do better." Why don't we do better on the first iteration when we implement something? Why do we have to continually go back and revise and revamp and bring in a whole new slate of people and start the process all over? We need to move ahead.

We've asked again and again for a select committee to investigate Ornge, as was the will of this House and as was agreed to by the minister herself. We need to ensure that more witnesses are able to come forward with information and be allowed time to speak on their concerns. Only when we get this will we truly be able to get to the truth. As long as the government House leader refuses to respect the will of this Legislature to strike a select committee on Ornge, we will not get to the bottom of this scandal.

As mentioned a couple of times already in my remarks, this bill is nothing more than an attempt to divert attention away from the fact that the minister has had the power to appoint a supervisor and/or inspector from the very beginning of this Ornge saga. The minister had the power to intervene at Ornge under the original Ornge performance agreement, as well as the Independent Health Facilities Act. Article 15 of the original performance agreement gave her powers of intervention. Why didn't she show leadership? Why didn't she step up with the legislation she already had and act, as opposed



to introducing yet more paperwork, more endless bureaucracy and this administrative boondoggle?

It's a shame that the Premier, the cabinet and Liberal MPPs are not as committed as we are to getting to the bottom of this scandal. Why don't they want to find out what happened and ensure that those responsible are held accountable and, most importantly, determine what has to be done to restore confidence in our air ambulance service?

Speaker, that's our objective, and we intend to get there. We owe it to the Ontario public. We owe it to the front-line staff of our air ambulance service, the paramedics, the pilots, the engineers, the dispatchers, the maintenance crews and the administrative staff who are dedicated to providing an essential health care service to the people of this province.

I want to assure those people that we will do everything in our power on this side of the House, on their behalf, to achieve that objective.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Mr. Speaker, it's always a little bit odd when the lead starts the week preceding and then continues. Anyway, I was there when the member from Newmarket–Aurora started his lead, and I listened to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound from beginning to end, the end being today. I agree with lots of what they have put forward; things such as the expression that I think the member from Newmarket–Aurora used, “We shut the barn door once the horse had already left”—I think applies very well, in the sense that there is so much scrutiny on Ornge right now that the people in there wouldn't dare raise a finger without making sure that it is in the protocol. To come out with this new legislation—some of it is very problematic to me and to us—after the scandal is already done, after the harm is already done, is very little consolation.

They talk about building confidence back into the system. This is something you hear the NDP talk about a lot. When we talk about health care, health care happens between individuals. That relationship between the care providers and the person receiving the care is at the core of confidence. Once you've lost this, you have lost the ability to deliver top-quality care, and this is a shame.

They talk about two glaring myths in this bill—that is, if you are serious that you want to give people transparency and accountability, then rather than inventing new powers, why don't you use effective levers that we already have? Why don't you give the Ombudsman oversight of air transportation, and why don't you make this agency FOI-able?

I'll have more to say soon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to add my comments to those of the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and urge that the members of this House speak in support of Bill 50, or at the end of the day would be supportive of Bill 50, because I think it's that step

forward that we all need and a challenge that's been placed before this House—where an organization does things that you would otherwise it did not do.

What we propose to do or what the bill proposes to do is that we're able to appoint a supervisor and move in quickly. I think all members of this House would agree that that's something that should be done. When a challenge faces any government at any time, you want to be able to move quickly. So the ability to put a special investigator in there or to put a supervisor, I think, is good, sound management and something that we should be promoting and should all be supporting.

We should also be allowed, at the provincial level, to give directives to the air ambulance service in the same way that we've all gotten used to doing at the hospitals. When things got out of hand a little bit at the hospitals in the past under any party, we've been able to move in and make changes. That's what we'd like to see here. I think any agency of the government that is operated on behalf of the government should have a level of accountability similar to what you would find in the private sector, for example, where there are performance measures, where there are standards that are put out there and the organization can then be held to account using those performance measures and standards as a bit of a guide.

I believe we also need to have a performance agreement with any agency that operates on behalf of the government, especially one such as Ornge or the air ambulance service that provides such a necessary and needed service to the people of the province of Ontario. We need to be clear, in that performance agreement, that responsibilities exist that are expected on behalf of the ministry and that will indeed be provided by the air ambulance service. By supporting Bill 50, you allow this to move forward to the committee stage. I'm sure there will be some further comments at that stage, but I think it's important that we move to that stage.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I do respect the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound as the critic for the health care file. I think he did a commendable job in terms of, I think, just telling it the way it is. He's very good at that. In fact, he followed the remarks by Frank Klees, made earlier, where he said basically that the actions of Bill 50 are completely unnecessary; in fact, there are regulations, etc., under the current Ambulance Act to do the same thing. But this is really kind of a whitewash, trying to move forward and act like they're doing something. I agree. That's kind of the argument he put forward.

But I want to put one more thing on the table, too. We all get letters from frustrated civil servants, and I want to put on the record here one Julie Wood, who has written to members of our caucus and, I think, to the Premier as well, outlining some of the people who are in charge, not just at Ornge. Ron McKerlie is now in charge. He was the former super-deputy from, I think, government services. In one of these memos, he is criticized quite openly. I'll put that on here, supporting that observation,

except that others were saying—these are former civil servants. It looks like the blind leading the blind.

Why don't they let the Ombudsman take care of this? What's this special section? If you look at the first section of the bill, it says, "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may appoint special investigators to investigate and report on the activities" to the minister. Why wouldn't you just let the Ombudsman do it? If we really want it to be clear and open and transparent, what's the problem with letting André Marin? He's the king of all—he'd out you in five seconds.

Now the deal here is that there's a lot of power to the minister. They have messed this file up so badly that Bill 50 is completely unwarranted.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Come on. Say something nice.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Look, we'd like you to straighten out the mess. What we really want is a select committee on Ornge. That's what we want. In that vein, I would like—oh, I ran out of time or I would have called for bells.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I listened carefully to the members from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Nickel Belt, Oakville and Durham, and I'm happy to speak about G50 today. Clearly, we need to strengthen this bill, and I think it's important to talk about protecting whistle-blowers. But I think it's also important to talk about how to restore public confidence in our public health care system.

I grew up in an era where the Conservatives were in power and there was an education minister who was on record as creating a crisis in the public education system, and who went to every length to actually make that happen, to create that crisis of confidence in the public. Unfortunately, I feel like we're going down that same route again here, where there's a real crisis of confidence in the health care system. Until the government actually steps up and takes responsibility for what has happened with Ornge—and we haven't heard this yet—it's going to be difficult to win the public's trust back.

Listening to the member opposite talking about the kind of accountability in the private sector, I think the problem is that there is over-confidence on the government side that private delivery is going to work and be accountable, when in fact it's not. It's only accountable to itself, and we need to bring back public accountability at this point.

1350

We need to make sure that the public is back on-side, that we don't move down the path of privatization. We've got real concerns about the OPS being privatized at this point—we heard that today in question period—and we need the government to talk about public accountability, not just the accountability of the private sector here.

I think we need to have this debate, but there are some difficult things. This was announced the same day that Ornge was being investigated. The public cannot be fooled this easily. It seems like a distraction to the public.

We need to get to the bottom of the Ornge scandal at this point and then move forward with this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We now can return to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. He has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** As I said, and as some of my colleagues in this House have stated just now, this is closing the door after the horse is out of the barn. It's way too late; it's trying to play catch-up. Worse, it's disingenuous, because it's trying to deflect and divert attention away from the true matters at hand. The minister knew full well from the start that she had the powers to step in and do something. The Premier knew, the finance minister knew; they could have done all of this without this.

There are 500,000 pieces of regulation. What we should be doing—and we've said it from day one in our platform last fall. We need to get rid of regulation, not add more. That seems to be what the government of the day wants to do. They want to add more and more paperwork; they want to add more and more layers of government. Unfortunately, in this case they even have a tangled web of administration and bureaucracy so that we can't get to the answers.

We've been asking for an Ornge select committee to be able to get to the truth of the matter. This is nothing but a red herring. It reads like a knee-jerk reaction to the years-long fiasco at Ornge, serious breaches of public trust that the Liberal side of the House, namely the Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance and Premier, has tried to dodge and hide. Over and over, it's becoming indicative of their incompetence to be able to manage the affairs of our province.

This is nothing but a cover-up. It's a case of them wanting to divert and move around. They want to just get it out of the limelight so they can bring some of their stuff back into the limelight. It's nothing more than a damning failure of the minister and her government to fess up and admit what they knew. Bill 50 is proof of deep cynicism and failed leadership at the ministry. This piece of legislation is going to do nothing to actually improve health care for the people of Ontario.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** It's a shell game.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a shell game. As my colleague from Elgin-Middlesex-London said, it is a shell game. We're seeing too many of these shell games. That's why we have a \$15.3-billion debt that's moving to \$30 billion. We need to start doing the things that Ontarians expect.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I guess it will be my turn to state a bit of the NDP's position regarding Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services; le projet de loi 50, la Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens.

Let me start by saying that the tabling of this and the press conference for this bill was, let's just say, very suspicious by its timing. As the Auditor General was presenting his special report on basically the scandal at



Ornge, the Minister of Health chose the same day to introduce Bill 50. In the business of politicians, it is called changing the channel. What the Auditor General was bringing forward is a real shame, a real scandal. This bill was given to us on the same day as the damning report was coming out.

The Minister of Health—and, to much of an extent, the Premier—would like us to believe that they had no part in creating the disaster at Ornge. Since March, when it first came out, they have gone to great lengths to show that the blame has nothing to do with them; it has to do with a faulty accountability agreement. Yet they did not even provide the oversight that was prescribed in the agreement, and I will go into more details about this.

They blame Ornge, yet Ornge officials, one after the other, have told us that the government was briefed every step of the way. How can you have people at Ornge telling us, “We briefed the government every step of the way,” and then the government telling us, “We knew nothing. Had we known, we would have acted, but we knew nothing”? It’s becoming hard to believe.

Then they started to blame the bureaucracy, in spite of the fact that it is clear that MPPs were intentionally shielding themselves from the information, although there are fingerprints of elected representatives all over Ornge.

The government has even tried to blame the opposition, that it is the PC and the NDP’s fault that this scandal went on, implying that we could have done more. At least it’s an admission that something should have been done sooner—I guess I’ll try to look at the glass as half full. But to blame the opposition when really we, the NDP, filed 42 questions in estimates about Ornge and never got answers for over 20 months; we filed freedom-of-access-to-information requests regarding Mr. Mazza’s salary. Mr. Mazza was the CEO of Ornge and is the one that everybody now knows was making \$1.4 million. But apparently it is our fault, the NDP’s and the PCs’, that the Liberals didn’t act.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Blame everybody else.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Blame everybody.

Then it gets even more twisted, because the minister changed her story halfway through. She introduces Bill 50 and holds a press conference. The press is all there, and so am I. One of the reporters from CBC—Christian Noël, actually, from CBC—asked her, “Did alarm bells go off when a letter that Ornge had put together”—it was a substantial document that basically outlined step by step the steps they had done to build these for-profit companies around the not-for-profit Ornge, with a schematic and everything. When this was presented, the minister said, “Oh, yes, a red flag went up, alarm bells went off. We tried to get answers, but we were stonewalled”—as in, they were trying to do the right thing, they were trying to get to the bottom of what happened, but they couldn’t get information.

Yet when we asked everybody at Ornge, not one of them was ever asked a question. When we asked the bureaucracy what kind of follow-up they had to do

following this briefing—it is quite remarkable that you have dozens of people who received this briefing, who received this document, yet very few even remember they got this document. Even fewer of them remember ever reading it, and the few whose job it was to read this will tell us that, oh, they told the minister, but no red flag went up, no bells were ringing and no follow-up.

Yet we have the Minister of Health on tape, from at least 15 different TV radio stations, saying, “Oh, yes, alarm bells went off, a red flag went up. We followed up. We were stonewalled.” But it looks like none of that is true. It doesn’t look like it raised any alarm bells. It doesn’t look like it raised any red flags. It certainly doesn’t look like they did any follow-up work, and it certainly doesn’t look like they were stonewalled.

Then the Minister of Health told us that when she became aware of the outrageous salaries that were paid and the number of for-profit companies that had been put in place, she had fired the board. All of them were gone—to be replaced, to turn the page, to put a clean slate into place.

**1400**

But yet, we learned when some of the previous board members that apparently had been fired—“Out the door you go. You guys did bad, and out you go.” That’s not what happened at all. Those people came, they talked to us and they said, “She never fired us. No, no. We asked to meet with her, and we decided to leave so that they could appoint.” I’m scratching my head here and asking, “What’s going on?” The Minister of Health is telling us that when she became aware, through the work of our good auditor and through the front page of the Toronto Star, which probably helped just a little wee bit, she called a meeting. But then we hear that she never really called a meeting; it was Ornge who called them when they saw their name splattered in black, painted black on the front page of the paper. And then they were never told to resign, Mr. Speaker; they decided to leave on their own. This is the type of leadership that doesn’t score very high in my book, doesn’t—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Durham.

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’m concerned about the lack of attendance here. I wonder if there’s a quorum present, listening to this—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I’ll ask the table to ascertain if there is indeed a quorum.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. I return to the member for Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** So we’re about at day five of the public accounts hearings on the Auditor General’s special report, and the story is starting to come together. We have pieces of the puzzle, and now we’re starting to see the picture of the puzzle. What we see is that Ornge was made up of a whole bunch of for-profit companies. We’ve seen that it was not only Ornge’s incompetence or mismanagement, like the government wants us to

believe, that the story ends there, but it looks like the government should have known, did know, and kind of purposely was hiding what was going on, that the government actually had many levers for action but chose not to use them. And then you can't help but ask yourself, if you know that this is wrong—I mean, how could anybody agree with paying somebody \$1.4 million of taxpayers' money to manage a \$150-million budget? We have hospital executives that manage four or five times that amount, and hopefully none of them will ever make \$1.4 million, not under an NDP watch, I can guarantee you that. Yet we were seeing this.

So why was this allowed to happen? Why is it that although we saw this shell game of companies going on and the government saw that too, and we saw the outrageous salaries and the government knew about this, they did nothing? I can't help but think, Mr. Speaker, it was because it served their purpose. They had something to gain in letting it continue.

They expected Ornge to privatize some of their services—that was part of the purpose; Ornge never hid that part of it—leveraging Ontario's assets, knowledge and skills so that apparently we could make money and that money would come back to Ontario and serve the people of Ontario. From looking at what happened, it looks like everything went according to plan, Mr. Speaker. They did leverage the assets of Ontario, they did build a whole bunch of new companies, and they did pay Dr. Mazza \$1.4 million. In the meantime, a whole bunch of people intimately connected with the Liberal campaign—Liberal government made a ton of money.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Feels like a company.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes, it feels like a company.

So here we are now. When we first started asking questions about Ornge, the minister stood at her seat and told us that if it was the will of the House to investigate Ornge, she would respect this. Well, let me tell you today, Mr. Speaker, that it is the will of the House that Ornge be investigated by a select committee of the Legislature. We actually took a vote, and the will of the House carried. The will of the House told us that we want an investigation on what happened at Ornge. We want to know who knew what, when, so that the mistakes of the past serve for lessons for the future, so that we learn from our mistakes. First, we acknowledge that we've made a mistake, then we learn from them; we do better, then we turn the page. This is what a select committee would allow us to do. But in spite of this, in spite of telling this House that if it was the will of the House that we could do this, the government is steadily refusing to put together a select committee.

The bits and piece of information that we are putting together come from the hearings that we are having at public accounts. But a very basic question remains, Mr. Speaker. How come the government can't even admit that they did wrong? How come they can't admit that they had a role to play in this fiasco? If you don't acknowledge that you have a problem, how can you convince us that you're willing to fix the problem and that you will fix it right?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It's the first step.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It's the first step. How can we be assured that it won't happen again? If you're not willing to accept that there's a problem, then chances are it will happen again, and government money will continue to be wasted, services will be put at risk and the confidence in our health care system will continue to be shaken at a time where people need reassurance.

It looks to me right now that this government is simply hoping that the bill will change the channel. I think Ontarians deserve better than this. They deserve a full account of the facts and they deserve a government that can stand up, look at their own role in creating this disaster and find ways to actually assure Ontarians that that will not happen again. Today, instead of moving forward toward that goal, I fear that we are moving further away.

One of the key statements of the minister is that she wants Ornge, the air ambulance, to be more transparent. Actually, even with Bill 50, I'm really afraid that Ornge will continue to not be that transparent. Ornge will not be subject to freedom of access to information.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker: Organizations and agencies behave really differently when they are subject to FOI. Just look at the 150 hospitals in Ontario. They became FOI-able. They fell under the freedom of access to information law on January 1 of this year. On January 2—because I think the 1st was a weekend—all websites of every hospital in Ontario had posted the contracts of their CEOs, as well as their salaries and compensation. You would never have seen this before if it was not that they fell under FOI.

To bring an agency under the freedom of access to information law changes the behaviour of those agencies for the better. It changes the behaviour of those agencies, and they become more transparent. They become proactive in being transparent, which I think would help Ornge. I think it would help people regain confidence if Ornge was under the freedom of access to information, but there is slim chance that that will happen, although, today, in question period, the Minister of Health said that she's quite ready to listen to the other side, to take good ideas.

The system is set up in a way that, in order to move things forward, such as bringing them under freedom of access to information, we would need unanimous consent. It is not part of Bill 50. It would need to be added to Bill 50, although it is part of the spirit of Bill 50. Things don't work in spirit in here; they are in black and white, in clause-by-clause in legislation. I took the briefing on Bill 50; I can assure you that it is not in there. In order to put it in, which seems to be a pretty reasonable thing to do, make them FOI-able. Make them behave in a way that is more transparent. Isn't this what we all want them to do? We will ask for unanimous consent. We already know, because of the questions that were asked this morning by a member of the PC caucus, that they also want freedom of access to information. I hope I'm wrong, Mr. Speaker, but I hope that when I ask the Liberals if they



will give their consent to bring Ornge under the freedom of information act, they will actually agree. I have my doubts, but I am putting it out there. I will be asking for your consent and I hope, Minister, that you will give it.

1410

The other part that would greatly improve transparency is Ombudsman oversight. Air ambulance, Mr. Speaker, I don't have to tell you, deals with life-and-death situations, and sometimes things go wrong. We can all think of events where air ambulance would be called in. In the north, we depend on them an awful lot—most of the time, in most tragic accidents that happen in the north. But they happen in southern Ontario. Everybody will remember what happened with the train that derailed. We all saw the picture of this ambulance standing on the side, waiting to transfer people to a place where people could help them. Life-and-death events occur in and around air ambulance. When that happens, sometimes things go wrong. Sometimes families have questions. Sometimes families worry that their loved ones maybe did not get exactly what they wanted. Whether it's justified or not, it doesn't matter. In your heart, you wonder and want answers. You want to be able to bring closure to the loss of a loved one, to the loss of opportunities, to life-and-death events. The Ombudsman does that. The Ombudsman is that third party, this arm's-length individual who comes in and gives you answers. They have investigated dozens and dozens of complaints. They have very knowledgeable and skilled staff who know how to do investigations, they know how to get answers to people's questions, and in health care they bring families closure. The families feel reassured that they know the full story, that somebody on their side went to bat for them and got them the truth about what happened. Whether it's good or ugly, it allows people to move on; it allows people to turn the page; it allows families closure. This is something that would bring great transparency into Ornge.

But here again, Ombudsman oversight is not part of Bill 50. They go nowhere near bringing a third party independent investigator into Bill 50. Here again, we heard through question period that the PC caucus would like to see that. We would like to see Ombudsman oversight of this agency. Here again, we will be limited by procedures. The only way to bring that forward, Mr. Speaker, is to have unanimous consent.

Minister, once again, I will be asking you for consent to bring Ombudsman oversight of Ornge in whatever form air ambulance takes in this province. Will you grant it? I sure hope so. Because if you are serious about wanting to bring transparency, then one of the wonderful tools that exists in this assembly and in this province is the Ombudsman, who speaks for the little guy, as his motto would tell you.

Then comes the sunshine list. You will all remember that in 2007—actually it was his 2007 salary, but it happened in 2008—Dr. Mazza, who was the CEO of Ornge, the air ambulance, was making \$298,000. We all know this because his salary was on the sunshine list.

Like everybody else paid by the government who worked in a transfer payment agency, his salary had to be disclosed if it was over \$100,000. So in 2008, when the list came out, we found out that Dr. Mazza made \$298,000 in 2007. I would say he was handsomely paid, if you asked me, but that was the fact.

Then in 2008 when the salary disclosure came out, Dr. Mazza had disappeared. Some would say, "Maybe he started making under \$100,000, which is the reason he was not on the list." I don't think too many people believe that.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Dr. Houdini.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Dr. Houdini.

There was another reason why he was not on the list. It's not because his salary was under \$100,000; his salary was actually \$1.4 million. You don't have to be very strong in math to know that \$1.4 million is more than \$100,000.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** What a raise.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was a pretty good raise.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Fourteen times.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yeah, 14 times. But the minister said she had no idea that he was making that much money.

Let me take you back in time, Mr. Speaker. We're now in 2009. We, the NDP, doing our work in opposition, keeping an eye on things, realized Dr. Mazza's salary had disappeared from the sunshine list. So we filed an access to freedom of information to the Ministry of Finance and to the Ministry of Health to find out: Where did Dr. Mazza's salary go? Of course, they didn't respect the 30 days—it took months—but once we got a response, it said that they had nothing to share with us.

During that period of time, from the spring of 2009 all the way to December 2011, they knew that we had filed an access to freedom of information. They knew that we were trying to get his salary. Did the Ministry of Health do anything about this? Well, if they did, it's a very well-kept secret. We asked people in the ministry—we've had the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister, the director of emergency services; we've had quite a few of them come to public accounts. We asked them, "Did you work on the access to freedom of information? Did you know how much he was making? Did you try to get answers to our access to freedom of information? Did you try to find out how much Mr. Mazza was making?" Some claim amnesia, others never heard about it, and most people never knew we had filed a request, never tried to get to the bottom of things. It was as if our request went into a black hole.

A director of emergency services sent us a little note that said, "Sorry, can't find anything," and it died there. Apparently, that you cannot find a salary that taxpayers are paying for, a salary that should be, didn't raise red flags, didn't sound off alarm bells. Everything was hunky-dory. He was being paid \$1.4 million of taxpayers' money, plus a few perks.

He was supposed to disclose this. We asked the ministry to look into it, and nothing: no red flag, no follow-

up, not giving him a call maybe and asking, "How much are you making? I'm giving you \$150 million a year to run this program. Maybe we could have a chat sometime." Maybe a little moral suasion: "We have this access to freedom of information. We'd like to know how much you make. Could you share that with us?" Nothing. Nothing was done. She had no problem transferring \$250 million a year to fund this organization, but apparently she was shy in asking how much he was being paid.

1420

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Eyes wide shut.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Yes. That is a lot of money when you don't even ask any questions.

Mr. Speaker, things got even worse. On November 16, 2010, it was time for estimates. "Time for estimates" are fancy words that mean the government comes to a committee—usually it's the minister, the deputy minister, all of their assistant deputy ministers—and the members of this Legislative Assembly get to ask them questions about their portfolio: "How much did you spend? Where did that money go? What did we buy with this? What does this program mean? How much money do you intend to spend?" It's an opportunity to go into more detail as to the estimates of that particular ministry. The Ministry of Health was chosen, so they came to estimates.

Usually I would have been the one—I had been the health critic in 2010—asking the questions, but my leader at the time, Howard Hampton, was subbed in on that day. He was subbed in because we had whistle-blowers come to the NDP, telling us that things were not good at Ornge; that salaries and compensation were going through the roof; that money was being used in ways that made some of the staff pretty nervous about the legitimacy of the money that the government was transferring.

I will read some of the questions—42 of them altogether. It's in Hansard. Anybody who wants to can just Google the Legislative Assembly, go to Hansard, estimates, 2010. It's easy to find. I'm quoting from Mr. Hampton directly from the estimates:

"Now, I have a question. If he"—Dr. Mazza—"is the head of Ornge, why does his name no longer appear on the Ontario salary disclosure list after 2007? This is the Ontario air ambulance service. It's 100% owned by the government of Ontario. He's the head of Ornge. Why would his name no longer appear on the salary disclosure list after 2007?"

That's in Hansard. That's the question that my leader at the time, Howard Hampton, asked of the Minister of Health.

It was the deputy minister, Saâd Rafi, who answered. "Again, I'll have to consult"—remember, this is a series of 42 questions; I'm just reading a few of them—"with the Ministry of Finance, who are responsible for regulating and determining who is included and who is not, and we'd like to get back to you on that."

So he just said that he would get back to us on this. He didn't know the answer at the time—no harm done. I mean, this is a huge ministry. I don't expect them to

memorize everything by heart, but I expect the ministry to be true to their words, and when they say that they will follow up, that they actually do.

Howard Hampton, my leader at the time, went on to ask questions about Ornge's corporate structure, the procurement process, the money spent on purchasing new aircraft. The questioning concluded with the following interchange—he's now talking to the Honourable Deborah Matthews, who answers his question: "Rather than answering a hypothetical question, what I'd like to do is get answers to the questions that you have asked." There was a series of them. "I confess to you that this is not an area I am well schooled in, and we'll do the work required to get answers to the questions that you've raised."

So both the ministers, in Hansard, realized that those were good questions he was asking about salaries, those were good questions he was asking about the corporate structure and the mix of for-profit and not-for-profit and how things moved between one and the other. Both the Minister of Health and the deputy minister said that they would look into it and they would give us answers. Not only did that happen, but the clerk who sits in at estimates and sits in on those committees wrote the series of questions that were left unanswered, to which the minister had agreed she would do follow-up.

So this letter was drafted. They passed this by the NDP office to make sure that it captured all of the unanswered questions. We said, "Yes, this captured the unanswered questions." They sent that letter back to the minister, as well as to the deputy minister, and said, "Here is the list of questions about Ornge that you have said you would give follow-up on and give answers to." Here they are, in black and white, for everybody to see.

The clerks are very neutral. They just gather the work together. They don't make their own questions. They don't put in insinuations. They just take whatever the minister had agreed to, whatever questions we had asked, and say, "You said you would answer. Please provide answers to those questions."

The way things work, it usually takes a couple of weeks, sometimes a couple of months, and then we get answers from estimates. Sometimes there are quite a few of those answers and they come in a little booklet. Basically, we get, in writing, the questions that the people in the ministry didn't know off the top of their head. I mean, this is a huge ministry. It is quite fine to not have the answers right here, right there, because we have a process to follow up, and the follow-up goes.

Usually, what happens is once you ask questions, then they go back to their office and split the questions with different assistant deputy ministers: "You're in charge of Ornge; you answer those questions. You're in charge of primary care; you answer those questions. You're in charge of hospitals; you answer those questions." And then the questions get put together and the answers are given back.

Well, how long do you figure it took us to get answers to our questions, Mr. Speaker? Usually it takes a couple



of weeks; sometimes a couple of months. For those particular questions about Ornge, the answers never came. To be truthful, the answers came after the special report, once the structure had completely changed and once the salaries had completely changed. Dr. Mazza was no longer there. The corporate structure had been changed. Years later, we got answers to our questions.

So we are supposed to believe that we ask questions in estimates and the minister, the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister, the director of the program tells us, "We will get answers to your questions, because we don't know the answers right now," but not one of them looked any further? Not one of them took any more steps? For some reason, the bureaucracy developed a great big black hole and those fell into it, never to come to out.

The other questions from estimates from that fall came. They were able to give us answers to some tough questions. I had asked an entire series of questions on primary care, which I was not too happy about, the way things were going. They spelled it out in black and white and answered those questions. But, funny; the questions on Ornge fell into a black hole.

When we talk to people within the ministry, it's rather interesting. I had this Mr. Malcolm Bates—I don't really know this man. I met him—actually, I think I had met him once before, but I don't really know him. He was one of the witnesses that came. He is the director of emergency health services, and he was there back when Ornge was created and all through that period of time.

I asked him if he was ever asked to do any follow-up on the questions from estimates, and he said, "No."

I said, "Did you ever receive the request that Minister Matthews told us she would get answered?" He said, "No."

Mr. Malcolm Bates said, "I did not know that you had not received information, because when we are asked for information, we provide it as quickly as possible." Mr. Bates was telling us that had he been aware that there were questions about Ornge, he would have gotten us answers; he would have done his work. But he didn't have an opportunity to do his work, because nobody asked.

1430

Here again, from an exchange with him, so I'm quoting from myself, which is a little bit weird, but anyway here I am: "So you were never told that there were outstanding questions from estimates that had directly to do with your division?"

"Mr. Malcolm Bates: No."

I went on to say, "Okay. Did you know, since we were given answers in March [of 2012], that somebody had given us answers to those questions" a year and a half later?

Mr. Bates goes on, "When we provide information, as the gentleman rightly said before, we provide it, if you want to call it, up the line. We provide it to our assistant deputy minister, and where it goes from there is basically the responsibility of another part of the ministry."

He went on to say, "If we are asked to provide information on questions of any sort, we provide that information."

I asked him, "Okay. Were you made aware that we had filed a freedom of access to information regarding the salary of Mr. Mazza?" which was directly in his department. His answer was quite simple: He never knew. He was never asked to do the work. He never knew that we had filed a request.

So, let's get this straight here. We have Howard Hampton, the leader of the third party at the time—everybody knows him—he asked a series of direct questions to the Minister of Health about the salary of Mazza, about the corporate structure, and the minister promises a response, but then the director of emergency services never sees this request and the answer never arrives.

So what happened? How could that be? How could that be that you have people there willing and able to do the work, you have a procedure in place that has been there for decades—and, I would say, centuries—of estimates, where questions have to be answered and follow-ups are done, but when it came to Ornge, the black hole happened and, although the people at the top told us, "Yes, we will get you answers. We're sorry, we don't have them, but we will get them to you," the bureaucracy is never asked to get the answers and no follow-up is done? This is hard to believe. This is really hard to believe.

The minister seems to argue that she simply forgot, and the issue of Dr. Mazza's salary didn't come up again until 2011. I'm having a hard time with that story. The picture I'm getting from the different pieces of the puzzle is not a pretty picture. The nicest thing that could turn out right now is that we have a completely incompetent minister, and I don't believe that. Every other scenario is worse than that.

It was quite interesting when we had the former Minister of Health and Liberal MPP George Smitherman come, and this is what he had to say on April 4 at public accounts. I'm quoting from Mr. Smitherman right now:

"When I left the Ministry of Health in 2008 and moved to another ministry, Dr. Mazza was making \$298,000,"—which is true—"was reporting that in complying with the sunshine list and the like, and the activities that went on subsequently were activities that were not to my knowledge. I cannot imagine"—his words—"a circumstance where I would have tolerated a situation where Dr. Mazza ended up making \$1.4 million and where the organization lost its focus.

"But the ministry bears a lot of responsibility for this because it is in the ministry"—here again, this is the previous minister, Minister Smitherman, saying this—"which had 8,000 or 9,000 employees, where on a day-to-day basis there are people who are paid to wake up and to focus on it. The real question I have is, at what point did they decide that they were dealing with what I described as a rogue entity, and what steps did they take at that time to bring it to heel?" This is from 2009, and we are now in 2012.

Why is it that in 2009 the NDP can file freedom of access of information, can raise the red flag, can send the bells ringing and say, "Look at how much money this guy is making," and yet the Ministry of Health, with their 8,000 to 9,000 employees, doesn't have the time or the energy, apparently, to ask how much he is making? Why is it that a caucus—we were a caucus of 10 at the time—we had the time and the energy to say, "Hey, you need to follow up with this Ornge because things are not straight. People are being paid way too much money. They're spinning a web of agencies that is hard to understand"? We raised the red flag, we sent the bells ringing and nothing happened—nothing. And to this day, the answers to those questions—I don't know if we'll ever get them.

If we really want to turn a leaf on Ornge and if we really want for that to never happen again, then why don't we bring Ornge and make them disclose their salaries? But yet we're talking about Bill 50 now, Bill 50 that is supposed to bring us more transparency and accountability. But are we asking that all subsidiaries of Ornge post their salaries? Nope. So the same thing could have happened. The same thing could continue to happen. The opposition, the NDP, could scream up and down and say, "Hey, have a look at the salaries that people are paying themselves in there," and the black hole would reopen, all the documents would fall into it and nobody would look, because this is what happened the first time. And there is nothing in Bill 50 that would prevent it from happening over and over and over again, because they're not going to be responsible to put the salaries on the sunshine list if we keep any of the subsidiaries. They have a chance with Bill 50 to change this, but did they take that chance to say, "We'll take away some work for our bureaucrats here. We'll make it mandatory that if they make over \$100,000, they post it"?

Remember what I told you at the beginning of my hour-long speech, that once you demand transparency, it changes everything? Once we brought hospitals under FOI, they voluntarily put the contracts on their website; they voluntarily gave us how much their executives were making. We have the opportunity to do that with Ornge but we're not doing this—we are not doing this. We need to close the loophole in the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act. That loophole would mean that if you receive money from the government, whether you're for-profit or not-for-profit, you have to disclose the salaries that you pay from the public purse. We fully know that those loopholes exist, but they are quite happy to leave them there. So why exactly are they giving us Bill 50? It is not for freedom of access of information. It is not for Ombudsman oversight. It is not for salary disclosure. What exactly is it for, again? Because I seem to have forgotten what we were trying to do with this.

Let's talk a little bit about ministry oversight, because this is one part that is in the bill. Apart from the matter of the sunshine list, there are many outstanding questions of whether the ministry did their job in providing adequate oversight of Ornge. In the Auditor General's report, the Auditor General said that "in February 2006 ... the

Ministry [of Health] committed to set standards and monitor performance against those standards to ensure that the 'end result will be improved care, improved access to service, increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of service, and the assurance of greater fiscal and medical accountability.'"

Sounded pretty good, if you ask me.

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But then the auditor goes on to say that the ministry never fulfilled their end of the deal. As the auditor says in his report, "However, the ministry has not been obtaining the information it needs to meet these oversight commitments." This is on page 7 of the Auditor General's report, if anybody is interested in reading it.

The fact that the performance agreement included many tools for oversight is not the issue here. You can have the best-ever accountability agreement, but if the ministry fails to do their job, then all is for nothing.

The Minister of Health's main line of defence is that the original performance agreement tied the government's hands, that they were stonewalled, that they tried really, really hard, Mr. Speaker, but they just couldn't get there, that although the ministry wanted to keep Ornge in line, they were prevented from doing this with an inadequate agreement and that they were lied to by Ornge executives. This is how they defend themselves.

However, in public accounts committee last Wednesday the issue was explored by one of the lawyers who was there when the agreement was drafted. She was called in as a witness. My colleague the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton asked a question at the time: "The minister has indicated a number of times—and I think you've already answered this, but let's make it clear: The minister indicated that the existing performance agreement was not strong, didn't give her the ability to do the proper oversight. I just want you to respond, given the fact that you've indicated a number of tools that the minister did have, including the ability to issue the notice of default or at least threaten to do so, including the right to terminate the agreement based on the 15 pages of covenants. What's your response to that?"

To this, the lawyer who was there who had worked on developing this agreement answered, "Those were all of their rights. In addition, the ministry, as the chief funder of Ornge, had great powers of moral suasion. I can tell you, all of my broader public sector clients work very hard to make sure that the ministry is kept happy with them." So it's not that the performance agreement did not provide adequate tools for oversight. The question is, the government did not hold on to their end, the responsibility.

The other argument that the Minister of Health is fond of employing is the idea that her office was deceived and kept in the dark about the goings-on at Ornge. They were deceived, Mr. Speaker. They just didn't know. But here again, the story doesn't add up very well because when Mr. Alfred Apps was called in front of public accounts committee and asked to comment on the matter, he said the following—and I'm quoting first from my colleague:



"You indicated that the government was thoroughly briefed on every aspect of Ornge before any step was taken."

Mr. Alfred Apps: "Correct."

"How do you know that?" he went on to ask.

Mr. Alfred Apps's response: "Because I participated in those briefings as a lawyer, reporting on the structure, how Ornge was insulated, what the rating agency thought of the structure." He went on to say that "the government was thoroughly, painstakingly and, in all cases, truthfully briefed in advance of Ornge taking any of these actions."

So when you talk about changing the salary scale, when you talk about the web of for-profit companies, when you talk about everything that shocked the minister when she apparently found out in December, we have a lawyer here—but it's not just any lawyer. He's a lawyer who happens to be the president of the Liberal association of Canada. There's a bit of a connection there. We have a Liberal government; we have a Liberal lawyer. So here we have—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Bob Rae was a Liberal. He was an NDP.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** He was not an NDP. Sorry; they're making me laugh.

There's a bit of a connection there, and he said that "the government was thoroughly, painstakingly and, in all cases, truthfully briefed in advance of Ornge taking any of these actions." How can we take the defence of the minister that she did not know, that the minute she became aware she acted quickly and decisively? And then we have those people coming to us and saying she was briefed every step of the way, that they never moved until after they had been thoroughly, painstakingly and truthfully—truthfully, Mr. Speaker—briefed in advance of any of these actions. Here we have a lawyer under oath telling us that the government was truthfully, thoroughly and painstakingly briefed about everything that went on at Ornge. But yet we have a minister that says, "When I found out in December, I was outraged. I acted decisively." None of this holds, Mr. Speaker; none of this holds.

We know that the chief of staff in the Ministry of Finance received a half-hour briefing from Ornge. We know of multiple conversations and meetings, yet the government has consistently maintained the argument that they did not know anything was wrong at Ornge before December 2011. How can the NDP raise red flags? How can we ask 42 questions? How can a lawyer under oath tell us that they have been briefed? But yet they didn't see anything; they didn't hear anything.

The question that cuts through all of the specifics of the Ornge scandal is whether we are merely seeing gross incompetence or rather if there is self-interest that also fuels this fiasco. A quick look at the facts provides a sobering reality. We know that Premier McGuinty's former chief of staff, Don Guy, billed on average \$3,670 a month to the law firm Fasken Martineau to provide strategic and public policy advice on Ornge. This added up to a cool \$107,000 for a few months' work. This came

after first learning that former Liberal Party president, Alfred Apps, working for the same firm, billed Ornge for \$9 million. In all of my years in health care, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter how big of a transfer payment agency I was dealing with—hospitals with hundreds of millions of dollars—none of them spent \$9 million in legal fees. Even if you will get sued, you will have somebody that—there are human beings working in health care and sometimes it still goes wrong. None of them spend \$9 million in legal fees. Yet this tiny, weenie, little agency called Ornge spent \$9 million in legal fees.

The firm's work included advising Ornge on setting up a web of for-profit subsidiaries, compensation for its executives, and whether the organization needed to disclose the \$1.4 million paid to Chris Mazza.

The more we look at this, Mr. Speaker, the more we realize that well-connected Liberal insiders have deep, deep roots into Ornge, and some of them, I would say, deep pockets.

Il ne me reste seulement que quelques minutes pour vous parler du projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens. La raison pour le projet de loi 50 est que notre service d'air-ambulance, Ornge, est un fiasco, monsieur le Président.

**1450**

Nous, du côté des néo-démocrates, on vous dirait qu'on est au courant depuis 2009 que les choses ne vont pas bien à Ornge. En 2009, nous avons demandé l'accès à l'information pour le salaire du D<sup>r</sup> Mazza, qui était le président-directeur général d'Ornge. C'était en 2009. Notre demande, ça a pris des mois. On nous a répondu qu'ils ne pouvaient rien partager avec nous.

L'année suivante, en 2010, pendant le temps des estimés, mon leader dans le temps, M. Howard Hampton, a passé tout un après-midi à poser 42 questions à la ministre de la Santé, au sous-ministre et au sous-ministre adjoint par rapport à Ornge. Ils n'avaient pas les réponses, mais ils se sont engagés à nous donner des réponses.

Après des années d'attente, aucune réponse n'est venue, monsieur le Président. De plus en plus, on entend des gens qui travaillaient chez Ornge—M. Apps étant l'un d'eux—qui nous disent qu'à chaque pas qu'Ornge a fait, ils sont venus en parler au gouvernement, ils sont venus en parler au ministère pour leur expliquer clairement quels pas ils allaient prendre et quels changements ils allaient mettre en place à Ornge.

Mais lorsqu'on en parle à la ministre de la Santé, elle insiste qu'elle n'a rien vu et rien entendu jusqu'au mois de décembre 2011. Comment se fait-il que la ministre de la Santé n'a rien vu quand on fait des demandes d'accès à l'information? Comment se fait-il que la ministre nous dit : « On va vous donner des réponses à vos questions par rapport à Ornge, » mais aucune réponse ne vient? Aucune bureaucrate n'a été demandée de faire des suivis à nos questions. Elle n'a rien entendu. On entend des gens qui nous disent : « On est venu les breffer. On a les documents de breffage. On a les vidéos qui vont avec. »

Des gens dans le ministère ont reçu ces notes de breffage-là, mais la ministre n'a jamais rien entendu.

Elle n'a rien entendu jusqu'au mois de décembre, et au mois de décembre, apparemment, elle a appelé le conseil d'administration d'Ornge. Mais le président du conseil nous dit : « Non, non, elle ne nous a jamais appelés. C'est nous qui les avons appelés après qu'on a vu le nom de notre agence sur la première page du Toronto Star. » Elle nous dit qu'elle a mis tout le monde à la porte, et lui, il nous dit : « Non, non, c'est nous qui avons décidé de partir. »

Il y a beaucoup, beaucoup de questions qui ne sont pas dans le projet de loi 50 auxquelles on doit répondre. Merci, monsieur le Président.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to respond to the member for Nickel Belt's presentation.

When the problems with Ornge were brought forward, principally with the January letter, the Auditor General was already doing the value-for-money audit, which eventually came out to be a special report in March 2012.

As soon as the minister was briefed on the AG's draft report, she asked ministry staff to prepare a list of options for her. This was in late October 2011.

On December 8, the minister asked for action on providing information on salaries.

On December 15, the ministry met with Tom Lepine, the COO of Ornge, and chair Rainer Beltzner. The minister told them they had to co-operate with the Attorney General's office on information.

On December 21, Ornge released the information on salaries, including the salary of Chris Mazza of over \$1.2 million per year. This is coming up to Christmas.

On December 22, the Ministry of Finance forensic audit team was sent in. This was very quick action.

On January 11, 2012, the existing board—they had put enough pressure on them—agreed to resign.

On February 16, 2012, based on the forensic audit, the minister sent in the OPP.

We now have a committee that has all the rights of a select committee.

The opposition parties are playing games with Bill 50. We have to get it moving forward, and it's very important that it move forward.

Ms. McKeogh, who is one of the senior lawyers in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, stated that both are required: the legislation and the performance agreement. These are very important, so I think the minister acted very quickly and got things moving in two or three months, where we had new administration at Ornge.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I always enjoy listening to the member from Nickel Belt, with her background and knowledge in health care and her genuine and sincere approach to important health care issues, and this is no exception. She has, as she said in her remarks, participated in the public accounts process, and I have no doubt

that the questions she submitted were well thought out and respectable.

In a general sense, I looked at the remarks that she made in response to the introduction of Bill 50 on April 25. Basically, she said much more about it today, but roughly the same thing: It's a bit of a red herring. In fact, she said that the bill really wasn't required.

In her opening remarks the day she had just heard about the bill, she said, "We just spent the entire day at public accounts, where we found out that the existing performance agreement had many levers in it that were never—they never even tried to use them," and they've been saying all the time that there's no power or authority that they had.

This bill, Bill 50, as most are saying, is clearly a bill to sort of change the channel, to get people talking about something entirely different. There have been mistakes made, there have been procedural motions in the House here—and in fairness the Minister of Health said, in a unanimous consent motion or vote, which was won and carried, that she would convene a select committee to get to the bottom of this outrageous scandal within the Ornge organization.

The minister and the Premier were briefed on it, they knew all about it and yet there were hundreds of millions of health care dollars—scarce health care dollars—that were spent in a very out-of-control, wildcat kind of organization. And there were close Liberal allies, as she pointed out in such a very deliberate and well-rehearsed argument—there's every reason there should be an inquiry on this. People will serve time because of the wrongdoing. And that's why this bill isn't required.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I sometimes wonder where to start, when we all speak about the issue of Ornge, but I guess I will start with thanking my colleague the member from Nickel Belt for her thoughtful commentary and her work on this file since 2008, when New Democrats first began asking questions; in 2009, when we understood that the salary disclosure for Dr. Mazza had suddenly disappeared; and to date, where she continues to push the government on the truth. The truth, ultimately, is what we want to get to.

You know, the timelines are interesting, but it seems as though the closer we get to some semblance of truth—I'd make the correlation of the reduction of seats that the government has. The less amount of seats they have, the closer we get to the truth in this House, which I think may ultimately lead us to the simple fact that a complete change in government may finally get us where we need to be, where we see a full picture of exactly what happened at Ornge and what changes need to be made within the delivery of the system and the entire model. So I'm optimistic, in that sense, and I would submit my colleague from Nickel Belt's name as a potential health minister in the future, because I think she understands the way things should be done, not the way they were done, as we've seen in Ornge.



One of the worst things I have learned is that of all the lawyers in the country that you could find—and there are certainly lots out there who would have jumped at the opportunity to help you navigate this field—you found one who was so closely attached. Actually, he was already in the backrooms; you didn't have to go far. Alfie Apps was already there, waiting to help conjure up this deal. It's probably one of the ways that it went so sideways so quickly. I would submit. Find someone outside of your own house to do those types of deals in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I, too, am on public accounts and have heard the testimony, and I get quite distressed when I hear partial reporting of the testimony.

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What have we learned? We have learned that the original order to draft a bill to create Ornge was actually given prior to the election of 2003 by the then Minister of Health, one Tony Clement, a Conservative. He gave the original order.

Once Ornge was created, a firm by the name of Fasken Martineau was hired as their legal counsel, and there was a whole host of lawyers at Fasken Martineau who worked on this file and billed Ornge over \$9.5 million over the course of this fiasco. The most responsible lawyer was purportedly Lynne Golding, who is a prominent Tory and coincidentally Tony Clement's wife. Also on the file and playing a prominent role was Guy Giorno, whom many of us remember here as Mike Harris's chief of staff and many people in Ottawa will recall as Stephen Harper's chief of staff. Obviously, Speaker, a Conservative.

So if people want to talk about what party's tentacles are entwined in this story, people had better look at themselves, because there are a lot of Conservative tentacles.

We have asked Ms. Golding for the individual billings by the individual lawyers so we can in fact sort out who billed what, but that has not yet been submitted to the committee. But I do note she had Don Guy's billings. And do you know what Don Guy did for that money? He told—

**Interjection:** Nothing.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Well, perhaps that's true. He told Ornge to do what the Ministry of Finance asked them to do—to comply. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Nickel Belt has her two minutes to reply.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

To the member from Ottawa-Orléans, the quick action—you cannot call a three-year lag in action “quick.” The red flags went up in 2009, the bells were rung in 2010, and only after it hit the front page of the paper and Ornge asked for a meeting with the minister did we start to see action. The action may have come fast after that, but real leadership would have taken action when bells rang on freedom of access to information on the salaries, when the flags went up about a question in

estimates about the web of for-profit agencies that has spun out of control at Ornge. When we asked the minister, “Why didn't you ask?” she brings up arguments that she knew all along or that she should have known all along.

The member from Durham is right that we owe it to the people of Ontario to have more of an inquiry to know exactly how it could have gone so wrong, how we can learn, and a select committee would certainly be a good way to do this.

I thank my colleague from Essex, who is following what is happening at Ornge. We are all worried about what happened. When we see connections like this between a party president doing work and then it all goes south, we start to worry about—let's clear the air. Let's move forward.

To the member from Guelph, who sits on public accounts, I think we haven't heard the end of it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** As a member sitting on the public accounts committee, it pleases me that I can rise today and give my comments on what has transpired at Ornge.

One thing I know: that the minister moved in and that one of the first things she did was make sure that safe, high-quality care for Ontarians was provided, and, through the new board, that's certainly the case today. We have competent new management at Ornge.

The Auditor General announced his value-for-money audit in October 2010. His work continued until his report was released in March 2012. He had difficulty getting the information on salaries, and intervention—a lot of intervention—by the minister got the information out. The report was delayed from the fall reporting of the Auditor General, delayed a few months, but it certainly is more appropriate and has been the guide for the minister in the new legislation and the new agreement.

Following the last election, the minister was apprised of several serious issues regarding Ornge from the Auditor General's report and that those required attention. On October 27, she instructed her ministry to prepare a list of options for a plan to deal with them. As we've heard often from both the minister and the ministry, the performance agreement was weak, and the ministry's options were very limited. We heard that the other day from Ms. McKeogh, who's a senior lawyer at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and appeared before the committee.

Ornge was federally incorporated, so legislative options were even out. The minister met with the AG on December 1, 2011, to discuss the Ministry of Health chapters which were going to go out in the normal report. The AG informed the minister that the Ornge audit would not be completed in time for his annual report.

On December 8, 2011, a letter was sent to Ornge asking it for detailed information on compensation. On December 15, the minister met with the chief operating officer, Tom Lepine, and then-board chair Rainer Beltzner. The minister demanded that they disclose

executive salaries and co-operate with the Auditor General. On December 21, Ornge released the compensation of senior executives, including the outrageous compensation to chief executive officer Chris Mazza.

The next day, December 22, 2011, the minister directed the ministry to send in a Ministry of Finance forensic audit unit. The next day—that's just before Christmas—that forensic audit group started their work. On January 11, 2012, the board of directors signalled their intention to resign, and the minister recommended the appointment of an interim CEO, Ron McKerlie. In January, a new board of directors was recommended for appointment. The new volunteer board of directors was directed to report back on patient safety, the use of public dollars and the development of a new performance agreement.

On February 16, 2012, based on the forensic auditors' report revealing serious financial irregularities, the minister referred the matter to the OPP. So it wasn't very long that the OPP was in there and the forensic unit from the Ministry of Finance was in there. Certainly, as much as could be done was being done by the minister.

The Special Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario on Ornge Air Ambulance and Related Services, dated March 2012, became the subject of importance to the legislative public accounts committee, of which I am a member. The minister acted quickly on the information garnered from the AG report.

Maintaining Ornge service and safety through all this turmoil is a credit to the minister, the ministry and to the excellent front-line personnel at Ornge. Within three months of the briefings to the minister following the delivery of the draft AG report, the Ministry of Finance forensic audit was done, the board of Ornge had resigned, a new board and CEO were in place, the OPP was involved, and the ministry had a new performance agreement in place.

The Ambulance Amendment Act before this house today, Bill 50, is now under consideration. It's important that that legislation pass quickly, and I would just hope that members of this House would act to get that legislation through, get it to the committee to discuss it clause-by-clause. The member from Guelph has explained well why this legislation is needed to supplement the new performance agreement. That was done, I think, last Thursday.

If this legislation is passed, air ambulance would be on the same footing with many other health sector and public sector transfer agencies where, if things go wrong, the minister actually does have the power to step in and take over. To call this legislation a red herring is absolutely wrong, especially in light of what happened with Ornge. Even though the Leader of the Opposition and your party may want to support Conservative-friendly lawyers working thousands and thousands of hours for Ornge that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars per hour, I believe it is your duty to stop obstructing the Legislature and to work with us to make Ornge one of the safest and best air ambulance services in the world.

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I would like to just call on my 35 years of experience, where I was president or chief operating officer of my company—certainly not a company of that size, but we had over 100 employees at one time—just to reflect on what I think happened at Ornge. I want to explain what I believe happened at Ornge based on what I have read and heard, including being part of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

I believe the original board, the minister at the time and all involved wanted the best possible air ambulance for Ontario. I believe that the decisions made to set it up with some elements of a private company with a lower amount of red tape—and that's what we're accustomed to getting in government. Red tape includes the interference from the funder, more difficulties making decisions etc. I believe that the original thinking was to have these freedoms with high ideals—this could have been the best arrangement possible. Unfortunately, with the shareholders shut out of the oversight as time went on—the shareholders being the taxpayers of Ontario—the public money started looking like their own money. With millions of dollars of public money to pay for lawyers, they found out ways to suck some money out of the building using public rent commitments. They looked at a way to work with the helicopter company to squeeze some money out of the helicopter deal, and, all the time, favouring them over us, the taxpayer.

We have seen the huge amounts spent on lawyers. In order to get that private start-up capital, lawyers were used to devise these schemes to steal from the taxpayers of this province, and the taxpayers of this province paid for those lawyers, as far as I can determine. As this private money accumulated, the schemers thought they deserved more money to recruit staff, educate friends or family and obtain loans. The story is an old one.

It is admirable to try to build a better organization and to run a public service. If those chosen to run it and/or their lawyers do not go rogue, something wonderful could result and we could have had a world-class service.

Dr. McLellan is the CEO of Sunnybrook Hospital, is a member of the new board of directors at Ornge and is the chair of the quality committee. He acknowledges that quality care and quality services are a concern at Ornge. He has pointed out three major issues: staffing, and specifically staffing of critical care paramedics and advanced care paramedics—Ornge is not fully staffed in these areas. The second thing he pointed out was the interior issue of the AW139 helicopters. The third was the quality of information around individual calls, including calls where Ornge cannot respond. The new governance model is important and is in place. Ornge does have very good paramedics and pilots.

Sunnybrook is the country's largest trauma care hospital. It includes aeromedical transport, and as such, they have discussed with Ornge the possibility to export the full technology to Brazil and Kazakhstan. So that's how far it went, and that was with the leader there, Dr. McLellan. He's one of the world's most knowledgeable



people, and he's on our board now and in charge of quality care.

The creation of the quality committee was the first step, and the framework of the Excellent Care for All Act, as it relates to hospitals, was used as the basis for the new agreement. Dr. Barry McLellan was the chief coroner for air ambulance service some years ago, so he is ideally suited to be heading up patient safety at Ornge.

We had the opportunity to have the deputy director of legal services branch, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ms. McKeogh, at our hearings. "In my view," says McKeogh, "the amended performance agreement and the proposed legislation, if passed, provide a strong and effective response to address the concerns identified in the Auditor General's report on Ornge."

A number of provisions from the Excellent Care for All Act were included in the amended performance agreement. Under the old agreement, the ministry was only permitted to make on-site inspections twice a year. That's not a good agreement. People were saying that that was a great agreement. They could only make inspections twice a year. Under the new agreement, inspections can be made at any time through the year.

McKeogh pointed out that article 15 only included the right of the ministry to take control of communications service, not the entire Ornge. This was made a point by the member of the opposition when he said that under article 15 of the agreement, it could have been taken over. Only the communications could have been taken over. This was not a good agreement.

Now we come to the important contribution to the debate. The member from Newmarket-Aurora wants to call Bill 50 the red herring bill, despite the testimony of Ms. Carole McKeogh, where she said, "In my view, the amended performance agreement and the proposed legislation, if passed, provide a strong and effective response to address the concerns ... in the Auditor General's report on Ornge." That's important; that's what we're trying to do. The Auditor General has been in there, he has given us instructions, he's giving us what he feels we should have, and we want to follow his recommendations. She is a deputy director with the legal services branch of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The member for Newmarket-Aurora says Bill 50 is not necessary. He says Lynne Golding told him it wasn't. Well, who is Lynne Golding? The member opposite puts so much faith in her. Lynne Golding was the responsible partner, and she played the lead role in the original incorporation of Ornge in 2004 and the negotiation of the performance agreement in 2005, structuring advice with respect to the formation and incorporation of Orngeco and Ornge Peel in 2007. I believe those are the private parts of the company. Ornge's first response to the first draft of the AG's report was in the fall of 2011. The corporate activities completed since January 1, 2012—these were things that she had worked on.

So criticism of the AG's report came from Lynne Golding. The corporate activities completed since

January 1, 2012: Well, Lynne Golding was at the centre of what went wrong at Ornge. She was the principal lawyer. There are about 250 work days in a year, so what were the taxpayers of this province spending on Mrs. Golding? In 2008, Ornge not-for-profit was paying Mrs. Golding \$5,700 per day, and \$700 per day for the for-profit part. In 2009, the numbers per day were \$7,200 and \$700. In 2010, when it seems things went wrong, it was only \$4,030 a day for her company, and \$3,700 a day was being billed to Ornge, but \$3,700 a day was being billed to the for-profit Ornge. In 2011, it was \$1,600 per day for the not-for-profit and \$4,050 per day for the for-profit. But where was all the money coming from? The money was all coming from taxpayers. And who owned the for-profit? Was it the taxpayers of Ontario? No, it was the board members. So we had \$4,050 a day for 250 days a year—over \$1 million of taxpayers' money being paid to support the for-profit. And this was all under the direction of Ms. Golding.

How did Mazza and Beltzner become the owners of the for-profit Ornge operation? Did they provide capital for the for-profit? No. Golding helped them artificially increase the value of Ornge office buildings through charging taxpayers higher rent and then increased the mortgage on the building, and suddenly Ornge for-profit had equity. Thank you, taxpayers. And how did they again increase the capital for the for-profit Ornge? They bought more helicopters than they needed and arranged to have money coming back to the for-profit, even though the taxpayer was on the hook for paying for all of the helicopters, and probably paid more to cover a kickback to the Ornge for-profit group. And who was behind this from 2003 on? Lynne Golding. Who was the lead lawyer on the file from 2003 to 2012? Lynne Golding was the responsible partner; she was at the centre of the sad affair all the way. Was she working for the taxpayers of Ontario? It does not appear so. The dollars were too great for her to blow the whistle: 22,000 hours were billed and over \$9,547,000 over that period. I do not believe Lynne Golding thought of the taxpayers of Ontario. The money tap was running too well, and at its peak in 2009-10, when all the illegal work was being done, Lynne Golding could have the comfort that every day for those two years the billing accruing to her company was almost \$8,000 per day, \$160,000 a month and almost \$2 million per year, split between the for-profit and the not-for-profit. I want to see Ms. Golding back at the public accounts committee. I want to know about her responsibilities to the taxpayers of this province, who were paying \$2 million a year and getting fleeced in the process.

I was in business for 35 years, and I always felt that I could wear only one hat at a time. I always felt that my lawyer should be working for me to make sure that I was dealing properly with my shareholders in that company. But this is outrageous. How could Lynne Golding possibly represent the taxpayers of Ontario and also charge the for-profit for structuring advice with respect to the formation and incorporation of Orngeco and Ornge

Peel in 2006 and 2007, the private for-profit companies? Ornge's first response to the first draft of the AG's report was in the fall of 2011. The corporate activities were completed, so January 1, 2012.

1520

Lynne Golding was at the centre of what went wrong at Ornge. Now, there are about 250 workdays in a year, so how did we possibly get into those kinds of dollars?

The member for Newmarket–Aurora in his debate about Lynne Golding, who was in charge of the Ornge file, saying that the existing agreement was great—that was what he was basing the fact that the existing agreement made up in 2004 was great. She told him it was great, so he said that it was great. We can see that she was the wrong person to be telling him that.

Ms. Golding said in Hansard that the agreement signed was great and gave all the rights that the government needed. That may have been so, but the lawyers representing the taxpayers of this province worked with a board that went rogue and used all kinds of legal manoeuvres to hide from the taxpayers the true facts.

So was Lynne Golding driving the getaway car when this was going on? Was she? Only the OPP will be able to tell us for sure. I will be asking our public accounts committee to ask Ms. Golding back to committee.

Ontario needs Bill 50, and the opposition should stop blocking its passage. If they have good ideas, they can bring them to the committee as we move into clause-by-clause consideration.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I was surprised the member from Ottawa–Orléans didn't finish his time, because there's a lot to be said.

I was most interested in his accusations of the profession of lawyers. Regardless of their stripe and party affiliation, he was quite critical. I think if he said that outside here, he might find himself in court.

The real issue here is, the minister knew and the Premier knew. They were briefed. They knew full well, and what's really more important here—most people that I've heard speak, including even the minister and the parliamentary assistant, implied that this was moving forward. Bill 50 was kind of part two. Well, both shoes have dropped on the floor on this thing, and they were both under the watch of Premier McGuinty and Deb Matthews, the Minister of Health.

Bill 50, it's been proven by all the experts I've heard speak on this issue—mostly Frank Klees, and France Gélinas as well. They've said that this bill is a ruse. There's absolutely no need for it. All of the powers and authority by a professional legal counsel, not some party hack person—not to say that Phil's a party hack. That's not what I meant. It may have sounded like that, but really what I meant was that a lawyer, under their professional ethical guidelines, said—and they're regulated by a college, so we have to kind of trust most of what they do—that they had all the tools necessary.

In fact, France Gélinas said it in her remarks, and I think it's worth reporting here. In her remarks today, she

said: "It's rather interesting to listen to the Minister of Health and her PA.... We just spent the entire day at public accounts, where we found out that the existing performance agreement had many levers" that had never, ever been used and never tried. They're already in the Ambulance Act. We don't need Bill 50, with more chatter about Liberal's moving forward and blah, blah blah stuff.

My sense is this: Public money's being wasted. Patients in Ontario are at risk. Some reports say that there have been injuries, potentially deaths, under their watch. This needs a full inquiry, not just a select committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened with some incredulity to the member from Ottawa–Orléans as he spoke. He spent almost all of his time attacking a lawyer by the name of Lynne Golding and her relationship to a previous health minister, her relationship to the Conservative Party and everything else.

But the reality is that I've been here now some 10 and a half years, and through most of that time, there have been Liberal governments. I sat here and watched as George Smitherman set up most of what happened. I sat here and watched as David Caplan set up and continued most of what happened. I've sat here and watched as the current minister sat there and watched what happened.

The reality is, the Liberal government chose to set up a P3, a public-private partnership. They stood there every single day of those nine years and talked about how wonderful public-private partnerships were, how they were going to work, how they were the way of the future, how they were going to save taxpayers' money and how they were going to run themselves. I listened today, and all of that, of course, is baloney, all of it—because what has happened with your much-vaunted public-private partnership in the Ornge file and probably in most of the rest is that there are no oversights that are capable of being used. The reality is that the government had levers and chose not to use them. The government let it happen.

You talk about the responsibilities of Ms. Golding. Ms. Golding works for a private company that you set up, that you had no oversight over. She was doing her best for the private company, not for the taxpayers of Ontario.

The lesson that needs to be learned over there is that P3s do not work.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, the question is: Where do you start? Do you get into the spitting match, or do you actually talk about what this bill is intended to do? This bill is intended to actually solve a problem. I'm disinclined, as a member, to get into the back and the forth, the things that will be forgotten 10 minutes after the problem is solved, so let's just talk about what this bill does to solve a problem.

Appointing a supervisor or special investigator when the air ambulance service is not being operated in the



public interest: Gee, that's just like what happens in a hospital. So what we're doing in this bill is to make the service of the air ambulance compatible with what happens in a hospital. That's fair.

Allowing the minister to give directives to an air ambulance service provider—just like a hospital. If the minister had had that type of freedom, you can speculate that this entire Ornge thing wouldn't have happened. So it gives the minister the ability to command something to happen at Ornge.

There's one point on which I am going to agree with my colleague from Beaches–East York. He talks about the fact that the structure of this particular arrangement was flawed from the outset. I'm inclined to agree with that. What was really flawed here was that a performance agreement, which is intended to be interpreted by reasonable people acting in a rational, logical, honest and straightforward manner—didn't happen. It's the same category and class of performance agreement that has been used time and time again, but if you chose to flout it, if you chose to go around it, well, surprise, surprise, you can actually break the law. That appears to be what a lot of this discussion is all about: Did Ornge break the law? Who broke it? And what do we have to do to get it fixed?

What we have to do to get it fixed is to pass Bill 50. I hope it happens.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Once again, I rise to speak to this bill and suggest that there's no benefit to the public health. This is simply diverting attention from the issue. Yet again, we're talking about things that have absolutely no benefit. We're introducing more legislation, not less, and it's the wrong way to go.

As many of my colleagues in the House have discussed, this is too little, too late. The horses have left the barn, now we're closing the door and we're trying to cover our tracks—typically unacceptable of the Liberal approach.

What they want to do is introduce more legislation. Let's do a bit of action, for a change. Let's do something that's actually going to improve the state of the people's health care in Ontario.

If as much thought was put into the original performance agreement as the web of for-profit companies set up by Mr. Mazza and Alfred Apps, we would not have this fiasco in the first place. We would not need a select committee, and in fact we would be able to be debating substantive issues, such as how to cut spending, how to lower the deficit and how to create jobs.

This is nothing more than yet again, "We messed up. We didn't spend the time. We weren't on our A game. Now we've got to go backwards, and we're going to introduce yet another bill" that again does not do anything for the whistle-blower protection that we've all talked about in this House. We need to ensure there's an environment where people can step forward. Those on the front line need to be able to come forward and offer the suggestions we need to improve the situation.

This piece of legislation is nothing more than a diversionary tactic to take us away from all the mess that Ornge is—and it's nothing more than a mess. It's wasting money. Now we're wasting even more time and resources debating yet more legislation. If they did a good job with the first legislation, we wouldn't even be having this. If they had actually cared about what they were doing with Ornge and not structured so much for these for-profit companies for Mr. Apps and Mr. Mazza, we wouldn't be here having this debate.

Speaker, at this point we cannot accept this new legislation. It's not doing anything for the health care of the people of Ontario. We will continue to get to the bottom of this Ornge fiasco.

1530

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa–Orléans has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker, and I want to thank the members for Durham, Beaches–East York, Mississauga–Streetsville and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for their comments.

I would just like to go—we interviewed Carole McKeogh. She's one of the most senior lawyers in the ministry, and here's what she had to say:

"I became involved in providing legal services for the ministry in connection with Ornge in January 2012." She hadn't been exposed to Ornge at that time. "At that time, I was asked to prepare an amended performance agreement between the ministry and Ornge. This amended agreement was signed by both parties on March 19, 2012. I was also involved in the development of the proposed amendments to the Ambulance Act.

"In my view"—this is one of the most senior lawyers in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care—"the amended performance agreement and the proposed legislation, if passed, provide a strong and effective response to address the concerns identified in the Auditor General's report on Ornge. I would like to speak to you briefly about these two initiatives."

So these two initiatives, as she said in the evidence she gave to us at committee—and I can't understand why anyone would not be pleased with what's going on at the committee on public accounts. It's doing its work.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** It's doing its work. We can bring people back if they have—and some people have already been.

This is important. This is a lawyer for the Ministry of Health. But who did your member suggest—that this agreement wasn't necessary? It was Golding, of course.

So I think we have to listen to the experts at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Carole McKeogh is certainly an expert and has done a great job. We should move this legislation forward. We should give Ornge—the new board and the new management—the chance to excel as an air ambulance.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the opportunity on behalf of the opposition to address Bill 50, the Ambulance Amendment Act, relating to air ambulance.

You know, just in the last probably half hour, an hour, I've heard this act described as a diversionary tactic, a changing of the channel, a bit of a ruse; I'll throw in bait-and-switch myself. A cover-up—that's something else that comes to mind.

We're looking at a boondoggle, a scandal—there's so much phraseology around this issue—unsupervised by this government, paid for by this government; essentially a free-for-all that clearly, we're concerned, has put patients at risk and has cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

So now, we have kind of a half-hearted effort—a number of us sit on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts—to try and find out what's going on, with very limited resources. We do need to find out what happened, and that is in the past tense, Speaker, because, as was mentioned earlier, people understand that closing the barn door after the horses have already bolted—you're left with an empty barn, as was explained by the Texas Ranger who is sitting next to me here. He knows a bit about how that works.

There's another analogy as well, and this continues—while the barn cats are away, the field mice continue to play. This kind of phraseology just puts in my mind the lack of government response, other than kind of a rear-guard defence.

This is truly a classic textbook example of lack of oversight. I think in the future, if young people in Ontario or Canada were studying management, this would be a case study on how not to do it, particularly in that area of oversight, that lack of control; a textbook example of very little to no accountability at all. There is accountability in the system but nobody pulled the trigger; nobody acknowledged the red flags that continued to come up.

This government spent five years looking the other way. They turned their heads while \$150 million a year went out the door, without questioning how it was being spent.

The day that the Auditor General blew the lid on this myriad of for-profit and not-for-profit subsidiaries was the same day we got this bill, Bill 50—clearly, to my mind, something to, as I say, somewhat divert or perhaps to brush it under the rug, legislation that really repeats what was already there. The powers were already there for this government to keep an eye on what was going on.

We continue to learn, as things twist and weave, of the revealing testimony. On Wednesdays, we really only have five minutes per party to raise questions. It's not enough. As we have indicated many times over, this has to be done in a better way, and we do need a select committee.

It was well over a year ago, as you would recall, Speaker, that we in the opposition first warned that provincial health dollars were inappropriately subsidizing

a complex web of for-profit companies. The health minister, Deb Matthews, ignored those warnings and didn't take any action. It is ironic, when you look at the moniker Ornge, that the "A" is missing. Accountability, which starts with "A," is missing with respect to this issue. Bill 50 is not going to do the job on this one.

The Ontario government employs people, a handful of senior officials, whose job it is to guard the public trust. It's very disappointing to learn that at least 12 of these officials—three from Premier McGuinty's office, a minister and four deputies—were fully briefed on the goings-on at Ornge in January 2011, apparently, but took no action. Again, it raises the question: Why did the health minister not intervene; why did the Premier not intervene? By refusing to act—and that is more than a year ago—and only acting now by rolling out a piece of legislation, this government may well have put lives at risk and certainly betrayed the public trust. Only recently were the OPP called in for their criminal investigation.

It's hard not to be cynical about this government and about politicians in general. It tars so many people with the same brush when we see this complete lack of control, this complete lack of oversight and really no hint of accountability at all or no hint of any action with respect to accountability.

It reminds me of eHealth. At the end of the day, the taxpayers ended up footing the bill for that particular textbook-quality case study of mismanagement. Hundreds of millions of precious dollars went down the drain. In the context of eHealth, Ornge air ambulance is just the latest scandal presented by this government, and something we have to deal with in this Legislature.

It was just a few years ago that we were debating eHealth—\$1 billion squandered on government friends and insiders. We have no electronic health care system at this point. We have no results at all from close to \$1 billion that was flushed down the drain. We asked for an inquiry at that time. Again, despite another damning Auditor General's report, the government rejected the calls for further investigation.

Inquiries are so important. Whether it's an inquiry even through a select committee, it's so important to try to determine what happened, to look back, obviously, to do the research—to have the resources to do the research—and not only to look back but look forward, to propose policy and propose reform, all the while conducting these deliberations in public view with the participation of the public and, obviously, expert witnesses.

Auditor General Jim McCarter at the time, with respect to eHealth, pointed to uncontrolled spending and no significant results. But he lacked the mandate to answer many of the important questions about the dollars that were funnelled to consultants. This was the report that highlighted the fact that one consultant at eHealth—this is going back to 2002—grew to a whopping 328 consultant contracts by 2008.

**1540**

Further, at the time of its amalgamation into the eHealth Ontario agency in 2009, the ministry had more



than 300 eHealth consultants and something like 27 employees. So given the potentially criminal behaviour hinted at by the AG's report on eHealth, including potential collusion, bid-rigging, overt obstruction of his own probe—again, only an independent, impartial public inquiry with a full mandate to subpoena documents, to subpoena testimony, would have provided the answers on that one.

Again, dollars down the drain; a further example of lack of oversight; no attention to results. This continues, as we see now, with Ornge, much as it did with eHealth. We have suggested, we have requested, that the present minister step aside, much as Minister Caplan honourably did the right thing with respect to eHealth.

So the bottom line, Speaker: While the government pretends that Bill 50 will fix—this is what the minister has indicated—what her government allowed to be broken, it's little more than a cover for a minister who didn't do her job. For months we've been asking questions in this Legislature and at committee, questions about what the minister knew, when she knew and how she reacted. At each turn, we were met with answers that simply don't add up. And this bill, Bill 50, is going to do nothing to clarify any of those kinds of inquiries with respect to the something like \$730 million that went out the door.

We in opposition had suspicions about the cost and the scope of this emerging scandal, and the Auditor General's report opened the door to some of the realities before us today. For example—from the report—Ornge funding for air ambulance services had increased more than 20% since 2006-07, while the number of patients actually decreased 6%. With respect to land ambulance, Ornge received \$65 million for inter-facility land ambulance transfers, projected to a number of something like 20,000 a year. However, Ornge is currently providing only about 15% of that projection.

The AG report went to highlight that while the Ministry of Health continued to dole out the cash, oblivious to its use, Ornge board and management "created a network of for-profit and not-for-profit subsidiaries and other companies with which Ornge has entered into complex financial arrangements to deliver air ambulance services."

Ornge's corporate head office: another example of one of these convoluted arrangements. As the AG pointed out, Ornge used \$15 million in funding, borrowed through a bond issue, to purchase a building that houses its corporate head office. Then it entered into yet another complex arrangement with other entities, which it had created itself, to sell the building and then rent it back. The AG calculates that over the first five years of this 25-year lease, Ornge was paying something like \$2 million more than it should on this particular lease.

Ornge has borrowed almost \$300 million to finance, among other things, the purchase of 12 new helicopters, 10 new airplanes and 11 used helicopters. And the Toronto Star reported that \$25 million in funding cannot be accounted for.

The Auditor General discovered that \$500,000 was spent by Ornge for two motorcycles, two custom-made motorcycles built to promote Ornge. They used them on the television series *American Chopper*. This is a California company, Orange County Choppers, that makes custom bikes. One of the motorcycles was used in a promotional event at a Blue Jays game, and at the time of this audit was on display in the lobby of the office building owned by Ornge. I think at the present time, one of the bikes has been sold and the other one is missing.

Speaker, "Ornge's first priority must be"—and this is very important—"to ensure the safe and timely transport of patients needing air ambulance...." To that end, in 2006, the ministry committed to set and monitor standards. I would like to read this quote: The "end result will be improved care, improved access to service, increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of service, and the assurance of greater fiscal and medical accountability." That sounds really good.

Why are we now in a position of trying to find out what went wrong? Those were just words, obviously. Obviously, the minister has a responsibility to ensure that things are run cost-effectively and in an accountable manner, meeting the needs of the public and our health care system. These responsibilities were clearly not met, and I don't have any faith that Bill 50 is going to make any changes to that.

The health minister was warned about financial irregularities, and we've confirmed at public accounts that she was advised of the intricate web of for-profit companies that were misusing scarce health care dollars and almost daily revelations of patient safety being compromised. But again, in her own words, she did little.

You know, Speaker, I don't think a day has gone by in this House since the AG's report when we've not been stonewalled by government ministers as we try to get answers to help inform new legislation. There's a lot of work that needs to be done on this bill to deal with, again, issues of lack of oversight, lack of control and lack of accountability—let alone ministerial responsibility.

Members on the other side of the House seem to have forgotten our 150-year tradition of responsible government, first established by Robert Baldwin, the principle of responsible government, the concept that ministers should resign if their leadership is called into serious question or if a major scandal occurs on their watch. Again, I see no accountability in this government. I see no ministerial responsibility. We see diversion tactics. I've heard that articulated many times this afternoon.

It's very upsetting, Speaker. As I mentioned, I sit on this public accounts committee. This committee does not have the horses. It does not have the tools. It's set up essentially to not be able to do the kind of work that needs to be done. We have called for a select committee. To that end, Speaker, and to indicate my disgust with this process, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Barrett has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1548 to 1618.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Will the members please take their seats.

Mr. Barrett has moved the adjournment of the debate. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table staff. Please take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing as well.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 24; the nays are 42.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

I return to the member for Haldimand-Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Speaker, I guess I interrupted myself partway through. In the remaining time, just to wrap up, as a member of the committee, an all-party committee, we've had an opportunity to bring forward information from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to this Ontario Legislature. Oftentimes the reception is very negative from the government. Fortunately, we have Hansard. Everything has been documented. Most importantly, as well, things are documented in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. It's a committee that certainly does not have the wherewithal that a select committee, let alone an inquiry, would have, Speaker.

I do wish to draw attention to the House—not everybody here sits in on the public accounts committee; not everyone here is following it on the monitors or is reading Hansard. We received testimony from one individual, Trevor Harness, a former member of the Ministry of Health's air ambulance Medical Air Transport Centre.

**Mr. David Zimmer:** You've got to be kidding.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I find that the member opposite—it always gets a rise out of this member whenever this particular Ontario government employee's name is mentioned. I'd like to quote Trevor Harness, and he expressly stated—this is in Hansard—before a duly organized standing committee: "Attempts were made to warn the minister of this growing crisis," but "they were all ignored by the Ministry of Health"—and I see now they're being mocked. Since 2008, Mr. Harness made several attempts to reach out to the Ministry of Health regarding management and patient safety at Ornge.

I find this disturbing, this blatant lack of oversight, let alone accountability, let alone control. I put forward that this kind of turning-a-blind-eye puts patients at risk. We know about the millions of dollars that went down the drain.

A former employee reached out to the minister's office, informed the minister's office of patient safety issues, and was ignored.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** It's curious, Speaker, that in response, apart from the response I'm getting right now, the Minister of Community and Social Services jumped up to demand of me if I would commit not to ring the bells during that day of debate on Bill 50. No bells were rung that day. I never said there would be bells; I never said there would not be bells. What I will say, though, is that was then—there were no bells; this is now.

Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Barrett has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1624 to 1654.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Will the members please take their seats?

Mr. Barrett has moved adjournment of the House. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table staff.

Take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 26; the nays are 40.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I am pleased to respond to some of my colleagues' comments.

The issue before this House is a question of whether or not this ministry took the appropriate steps, and now, the question of whether or not this bill will correct what occurred in the past.

Though the Minister of Health has indicated that the performance agreement did not have sufficient power to ensure that Ornge was properly—the oversight requirements were satisfied, it has become very clear in the committee hearings with the Standing Committee on Public Accounts that there were sufficient oversight mechanisms in place; they were simply not utilized. These mechanisms that were in place were strong. They provided the ability to have oversight. They provided the tools to persuade Ornge to ensure it fulfilled its requirements. Most importantly, there was the power of suasion that flows from the fact that the ministry was providing the funding for this organization; that if the ministry was to withhold this funding or even threaten to withhold this funding, they could more than have Ornge come into compliance with any requirement whatsoever.

While it's important to strengthen any agreement to ensure that there are no loopholes, we must acknowledge the fact that a select committee would get to the bottom of this—I support my colleague's comments with refer-



ence to that—and that there were sufficient powers in place before this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I think we have a committee that has all the rights of a select committee. The opposition parties are playing games. Public accounts is doing a full investigation.

I'll quote Ms. McKeogh, who is a senior lawyer for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:

"The amended agreement contains a statement of principles which Ornge must follow in providing its services. These principles include the requirement that Ornge's operations will support exclusively the provision of air ambulance services on a not-for-profit basis. It contains a number of elements relating to quality improvement and patient relations, which mirror the requirements in the Excellent Care for All Act. This legislation currently applies to public hospitals. Its provisions are made applicable to Ornge through the amended performance agreement.

"Under the amended agreement, a number of actions by Ornge require the ministry's prior approval. These include the purchase of real estate; incurring debt; the sale of assets ... as well as any changes to Ornge's corporate structure....

"I have also been involved in the development of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services, which received first reading on March 21, 2012." That's what's under consideration here today. "The proposed legislation, if passed, would provide the province with many of the same powers for intervention in the public interest which currently exist for public hospitals under the Public Hospitals Act." Those work, so those are the ones we want to adopt as part of this legislation.

"However, in the case of public hospitals, the legislative framework includes the power to intervene in the governance of a hospital through the appointment of a hospital supervisor, who can assume all the powers of the board and the corporation. This is viewed as an extraordinary power of intervention which exists to protect the public interest. It is an important safeguard which has been included in the proposed legislation for Ornge."

I hope that we get away from all this bell-ringing and proceed and pass the bill so that Ornge can continue to be a great service to this province.

1700

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I listened closely; in fact, I left to watch it on television, there's so much distraction going on here. The member from Haldimand-Norfolk made substantial arguments that I believe will stand the test of accuracy. You know, it reflects a lot of what our lead person on this whole Ornge file, Frank Klees, has been saying.

I'm going to quote the Hansard record here. It says, speaking here directly, "The Minister of Health, I

believe, has done a great deal of discredit to her office by defending her role and by insisting that she had no authority" nor leave to step in on these things—which has subsequently been disproven by a qualified, highly ethical lawyer, who has said that she did have the tools and failed to use them. I put those on the record earlier.

It goes on to say in Hansard here—this is on Hansard. For the people of Ontario, this is a detailed thing, but we need a full inquiry. I'm almost at that point now—Bill 50 is strictly a shell. What we need is a full inquiry. There's been so much abuse. It goes on to say that she actually admitted that she had failed the people of this province. Imagine: She'd failed.

We've repeatedly called on the Minister of Health to do the honourable thing and step down. This is ministerial responsibility, the very fundamental underpinnings of a democracy that's functioning. There's deep trouble under McGuinty here, and we know that. But we're calling on the minister to do the honourable thing and have a select committee.

A lot of these troubled waters would be calmed. We would get to the bottom of it. We would get to the truth—most importantly, to get to the truth. The truth, as we all know, will set you free. Premier McGuinty will be free then to go on and ruin—or do—other things. I always like to give them a second chance. Do the honourable thing: Have a select committee. The waters will be calmed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to take this opportunity to comment on the member from Haldimand-Norfolk. I believe my colleague from Nickel Belt also used a similar analogy about closing the barn door after the horse already left. In my case, it would be after the cows are already out.

The problem with Bill 50: What it's doing is putting a new coat of whitewash on the barn, but nobody is actually looking at why the barn door was open in the first place. Nobody is actually looking at if we can fix it. The one thing that nobody is really looking for is where the cows went. As far as you know, the cows are still out there, and somebody has sold the cows.

For a bill that's supposed to fix a problem, or the barn door, there's some major issues. Firstly, Ornge will not be subject to freedom of information, nor will the Ontario Ombudsman have oversight of the agency. So really, one of the biggest problems, we're not touching with Bill 50. Ornge will continue to be an organization that cannot be called to government agencies.

One thing I noticed is that I believe Ornge spent—was it \$9 million, \$9.5 million on legal fees? If that works out to \$1,000 an hour, that's still, like, 2,000 hours. But this morning the government House leader said we'd already had 15 hours of hearings. Well, you know what? I think we're slightly overpowered by Ornge's lawyers to this date.

I don't understand why we just—the bells are ringing because we're not having a select committee. Call the

select committee. Say we'll have it after the police hearing. You know what? Then we'll find out when the cows come home.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, who has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The member for Timiskaming-Cochrane talks about how the cows have stampeded. At minimum, it's up to us to round them up again with whatever tools are available to us from the Ontario Legislature.

The member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton posed the question before this House whether this government took appropriate steps. I do wish to refer back to the testimony from Trevor Harness. He indicates, "Ornge was an experiment gone very wrong, an experiment whose responsibility lies solely with the Minister of Health, the Ministry of Health and the emergency health services branch. As far back as 2006, attempts were made to alert them to problems developing with the creation of Ornge. Not one person followed up on credible leads and factual information."

The member from Ottawa-Orléans—I know he questions the bell-ringing, but just to go on, from Trevor Harness, "The organization itself was built on a culture of fear, intimidation and harassment. Anyone who questioned any decision, policy or procedure was dealt with swiftly, from immediate dismissal to threats of legal prosecution." This is no way to treat Ontario government employees. To continue, "Many hard-working, responsible and dedicated employees found themselves forced out of a job they were committed to, and no one would listen at the Ministry of Health, whose job it was to oversee this vital emergency service."

Further comments: the member from Durham, calling for the minister to step down. Again, and I quote Harness, "Today, the reputation of Ornge is one of failure, mistrust and scandal. A once proud and efficient organization is now an international disgrace. Their credibility has been lost and the damage has been done."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I would love to join the debate on Bill 50.

First, let's begin with what's not in the bill. My colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane talked about this, but let's make this very clear: One of the key issues, one of the key concerns regarding Ornge was the lack of oversight. So in crafting a bill to correct the mistakes, why is it that two very essential elements of oversight are overlooked?

One of the key issues that we raised in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts was the fact that the NDP had asked numerous questions in estimates regarding Ornge and in fact had made a number of freedom-of-information requests to assess or to disclose what the salary was of the executives at Ornge. Those requests were unanswered. In fact, they were made in 2010 and

were not answered until about two years later—this year—in the public accounts committee. That is unacceptable. It's rather ridiculous.

A publicly funded agency should be required to disclose a salary that it's paying out of the public purse to its executives. That's simply a very reasonable and logical thing to do. The fact that this bill does not include a mechanism to ensure that the freedom-of-information request made would be answered is a clear mistake, and it begs the question: Is this bill really aimed at increasing transparency? Is this bill really aimed at improving accountability?

The Ontario Ombudsman is well respected and has a great role in assessing, auditing and getting to the bottom of various problems in this province. The Ombudsman did excellent work when it came to reviewing the SIU and their ability to provide the oversight necessary for the police. Similarly, if Ontario's Ombudsman is given the mandate or given the ability to access the records of Ornge, it would provide another tool to ensure that we have proper accountability for Ornge. These two tools are markedly left out of this bill, and raise concerns.

What's more concerning, though, is that the entire premise or the entire thrust of the Minister of Health's position in respect to Ornge is that she simply did not have the tools to oversee Ornge properly. She blames the fact that the performance agreement had some gaping holes in it, that the performance agreement was not robust enough to ensure that oversight was something that she or that her ministry could accomplish. But that is completely contrary to the facts we have before us. The performance agreement had a number of covenants—in fact, 15 pages' worth—that Ornge was subject to. That's a considerable amount of material. On top of that, the lawyer who testified during committee hearings, Lynne Golding, made it very clear—and a number of other deputants made it very clear—that what the ministry could have done, regardless of the performance agreement, was that they were holding the keys to the treasury. They had the money. They provided the purse. If they were unhappy with the service, if they had any problem whatsoever, they had the ability to withhold the funds.

1710

Now, of course, we would not want to have our air ambulance services suspended. But if the services were not providing proper documentation, were not providing proper information about what they were conducting or doing, then it's very reasonable to say, "Listen. If you don't comply, if you don't provide us with the information we need, if you don't disclose the salaries of your executives, if you don't provide us with information regarding proper patient care oversight, then we will be forced to withhold the funding." That is a very powerful tool that could have been used and was not used. It's been used with a number of other agencies.

In fact, testimony that we heard in the committee was that many agencies are very fearful of losing funding and that the threat alone of a ceasing or a suspension of funds is more than enough to persuade any organization to



come into line and to address any concerns that are raised. In fact, we heard testimony in the committee hearings that there was no issue in Ornge that was not discussed with this government, and they received one complaint, which was addressed. The one complaint that was received by Ornge from this government was addressed. But there were no other issues, no other concerns that were raised.

The ministry has a responsibility to ensure that scarce public dollars are spent efficiently, that scarce public dollars are spent properly, particularly when it concerns health care. We know that there are cuts that have been proposed by the budget. We know that health care is a priority in Ontario. And if dollars are scarce, it's even more important that we ensure that there is a rigorous application of a standard to ensure that our money is spent properly. We need to ensure that money that is spent in health care is not wasted, so that we have the best health care possible for the citizens of Ontario.

Now, I want to read into the record some testimony that we heard in the public accounts committee, just to ensure that members of this House know exactly what happened and they know exactly what the circumstances were surrounding the strength of the performance agreement that currently existed—or that existed before Bill 50.

There was an exchange between myself and Ms. Golding, and I wanted to clarify this issue of how strong was the performance agreement and did the Minister of Health's suggestion that the performance agreement being weak have any merit—did that argument hold any water?

I said, "The minister has indicated a number of times—and I think you've already answered this, but let's make it clear: The minister indicated that the existing performance agreement was not strong, didn't give her the ability to do the proper oversight. I just want you to respond, given the fact that you've indicated a number of tools that the minister did have, including the ability to issue the notice of default or at least threaten to do so, including the right to terminate the agreement based on the 15 pages of covenants. What's your response to that?"

Ms. Lynne Golding, who was responsible for crafting the initial performance agreement, indicated, "Those were all of their rights. In addition, the ministry, as the chief funder of Ornge, had great powers of moral suasion. I can tell you, all of my broader public sector clients work very hard to make sure that the ministry is kept happy with them."

So, if we accept now the Minister of Health's excuse that the performance agreement did not give the government enough tools or didn't give it the ability to oversee Ornge, what does that say about the government's role with respect to Ornge and with respect to the oversight?

Regarding closing the barn door after the cows are already out or after the horses are already out, we know that the Ministry of Health and the Minister of Health had full well the ability to close those doors and did not,

and have not to date come clean and indicated that, "Yes, in fact, we did not. We were not proactive with our oversight. We did not take the steps that we could have. It was our fault." By blaming the bureaucracy and by blaming the lack of tools, when we know full well there were tools sufficiently, the minister is distracting the argument.

The reason why we have to be clear on who is responsible, the reason why we wanted to get to the heart of the Ornge scandal, the Ornge fiasco, is two-fold: One, we want to know that our ministry and our Minister of Health are able to do the job. We want to know that the ministry is able to spend money appropriately, that they're able to manage what is one of the largest budgets in all of the ministries in Ontario, that they're able to manage their resources appropriately. Secondly, and almost equally important, we want to ensure that this type of thing does not happen again. Now, how can we ensure that this type of thing doesn't happen again when we don't know the details of exactly what happened? How can we ensure that another Ornge doesn't occur when we can't ascertain whether or not this ministry was able to indicate what they did wrong, what they didn't do and how this all happened, how this came to be? That's why it's essential that we have a select committee.

There are a number of obstacles and hurdles we are facing in the public accounts committee; namely, limitations in terms of the amount of time that we have to hear the deputations. In fact, there's also a concern that we're not hearing enough from the employees themselves, people at the ground level, who can tell their stories and indicate what was going on at Ornge and why resources weren't properly allocated and properly distributed to ensure that we had the best ambulance care possible.

We need to find answers to questions like why the government did nothing when officials from Ornge indicated that all throughout, every step of the way, Ornge had briefed this government, briefed this ministry, on everything that occurred at Ornge, including the web of for-profit companies, including the corporate structure. All of this was briefed, was advised. All of this was presented to this government. Despite the fact that this was presented to the government, despite the fact that all this information was very clearly disclosed, according to Ornge officials, to the Minister of Health and to the Liberal government, nothing was done. Why was that the case? Why was a blind eye turned in this circumstance? Why didn't the ministry act? Why were no red flags raised when there were some clear concerns raised?

This fact alone should have created enough of a concern that steps should have been taken: when we realized, or when the government realized, that Dr. Mazza, the CEO of Ornge, that his once-disclosed salary, previously disclosed under the sunshine list—once that salary was no longer being disclosed, it immediately should have raised concerns. The NDP asked questions about this salary: "What is Dr. Mazza's salary?" Once that request was made, once that question was asked, not

only in the committee hearings in 2010 but also through freedom-of-information requests that were made, why was nothing done? Why were there no red flags raised?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** If not red flags, at least some orange flags should have been raised.

These are very troubling issues, and they strike again to the heart of the matter: that Bill 50 seeks to correct something. Bill 50 seeks to strengthen the performance agreement, add additional powers, provide greater oversight. But what's the point of creating more tools if you're not going to use them? If the previous tools existed and weren't used, where is the guarantee that if we give you more tools, those will be used? When this minister does not accept responsibility, when this government does not accept responsibility, what faith do we have—what faith do the citizens of Ontario have—in this government being able to oversee Ornge when they had tools they didn't use and now we're giving them greater oversight? How do we have any confidence, or greater confidence, that anything will be done differently this time?

1720

What did we see in Ornge? We saw a publicly funded organization take public funds, public money, and funnel them into a net of private companies. Public funds were transitioned into private companies. They were transitioned into such a number of private companies that to follow that corporate web alone would leave you spinning. To see the complex web of companies, the for-profit side, the not-for-profit side, the public side—to follow that corporate web would leave you reeling, just to follow it. That alone should have caused concern. It should offend anyone that public money was used in this manner.

At the public accounts hearing on April 18, Peter Wallace, the secretary of cabinet, said the following. He indicated: "I am acutely aware of the need for the government of Ontario to continuously drive for more efficient operating models, including operating models that are not traditional, that involve other groups into the delivery of public services, including core public services."

Now, when we look at Ornge, there were not just the concerns of a private web of companies and a private web of corporations. We also have some clear testimony that the purpose of Ornge was to provide ambulance care, not to create an entire fleet or an alternative fleet of air ambulance airplanes, fixed-wing airplanes, helicopters. That's what in fact Dr. Mazza did. The initial agreement was that Ornge would be able to provide the services, provide the paramedics, provide the workforce. But what happened, in fact, was that companies that were providing the service at a more affordable or a lower cost overall were shut down, were bought out, and an entire new fleet was created, which was not the original mandate of Ornge. It was not the original purpose of Ornge and in fact called into question the quality of care that was provided.

Initially, before Ornge was organized the way it was, which resulted in the scandal that we see before us, there were far greater airport facilities, there were more aircraft, and the service that was provided was better. Ornge, under the leadership of Dr. Mazza, actually resulted in lower patient care. Again, that's not the fault of the aircraft operators, the pilots. It's not the fault of the paramedics. It's not the fault of the front-line staff. It's the fault of the executives. It's the fault of the ministry for not overseeing this. It's the fault of the board for not providing the proper guidance and oversight.

It's our responsibility to ensure that this stops. To fulfill our obligation to ensure that the Ornge air ambulance services are returned to the level of excellence and performance that they were once at, and to honour the work of the paramedics and the pilots that are involved, we must clearly lay blame at the feet of the executives, and at the ministry for not providing the proper oversight and for not enforcing the performance agreement that existed and that had sufficient tools within it.

We need to know all the facts so that we can prevent this from occurring in the future. We need to know all the facts so that we can ensure that this government can, in fact, fulfill its mandate of operating or managing an air ambulance service like Ornge.

To conclude my remarks, I want to make a couple of points very clear. Oversight is of paramount importance. The fact that public funds are being spent should be very vigorously, rigorously scrutinized to ensure that money is not spent in any improper manner, that it's spent efficiently and properly.

We need transparency. Transparency will come from a number of sources. One has to be the ministry. So we need to have some guarantees, some assurances that this government will oversee properly what is occurring at Ornge. We also need to see some independent sources of transparency, one being the Ombudsman. We need to see some legislation. We need to see some guarantees, some protection placed into the agreement, placed into the legislation that will allow the Ombudsman some access into what's going on at Ornge, so they can provide an independent source of transparency and oversight.

In addition, and of crucial importance, is that there needs to be access provided and no restriction from freedom-of-information requests so that, in the future, if there are any concerns, we have an independent vehicle or avenue to ensure there's information provided to the public to find out whether or not funds are properly being spent or used. This transparency is essential to ensure that we don't see another Ornge happen, whether it's in this ministry or another ministry. We need the transparency to do our jobs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased to respond to the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton on Bill 50, the Ambulance Amendment Act (Air Ambulances).

There are a few key points in the legislation that I think are worth getting on the record. The legislation will



appoint a supervisor or a special investigator when the air ambulance service is not being operated in the public interest, just like a hospital. It will allow the minister to give directives to an air ambulance service provider, like at a hospital. It will prescribe performance measures and standards. It will allow the ministry to establish terms that are to be deemed included in a performance agreement between the ministry and the air ambulance service provider. It will appoint provincial representatives on the air ambulance provider's board, provide whistle-blower protections for those who disclose information to an inspector, investigator or the ministry.

It also provides the means for the current air ambulance provider, Ornge, to become a provincially incorporated organization, which will even further increase accountability of the organization. It's important to note also that this legislation will apply to Ornge's critical-care land ambulances, but will not impact municipal land ambulances.

Other options were considered to bring greater oversight to Ornge, including bringing the service back into the ministry, but these options provide little value beyond the proposed steps. The current proposal is the best option that will allow us to move swiftly while not disrupting seamless patient care.

It's also important to mention a couple of other things. The member claims that the public accounts committee has limits on time a witness can appear. This is not the case. The committee itself, the public accounts committee, sets how long a witness can appear for. Public accounts has the same powers as a select committee in this respect. The opposition, I think, may be aware of this, and this is going a long way to fix the problem.

As well, Speaker, I would mention that there is an ongoing OPP investigation into this issue. The minister has responded, and we're looking forward to the results of that investigation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to bring comments after the presentation by my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton. Not only does he bring a legal background to it, he's a member of the public accounts committee and has in fact applied his keen questioning skills to the task.

He shared with us that the performance agreement, which had 15 pages of covenants, shows very clearly that the minister had the power and the ability, if she so chose to accept it, to step up.

He then went on to refer to Lynne Golding, another legal professional—very involved—who suggested that the existing performance agreement in fact provided the tools needed by the minister to take action and in fact had great powers of moral suasion.

He suggested that if those services within those agreements were not in compliance, the minister could, and in fact should, have exercised due diligence to protect the interests and, more importantly, the safety and health care of residents of Ontario.

He advised and suggested that, again, the government's duty is to provide rigorous duty to utilize health care dollars to provide the best service possible and to provide proper oversight.

He, along with many others, including my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk, very aptly described that the horses or cows—I'm thinking horses here because they seem to want the horses to go—were out of the barn already, and it's too little too late. This legislation, yet more paperwork, yet more ways to refute and subjugate the actual substance of what we're talking about, is just a waste of time. He suggested that there was a blame game going on. The minister just wanted to keep giving it—"It's someone else's problem," rather than standing up and taking and accepting responsibility.

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He asked a very important question: How can you ensure that this never happens again if you never get to the bottom of it? As such, we need a select committee, and I agree with him. The member from Thunder Bay suggested that you can do this with a standing committee. Not so: You only get about five or eight minutes with someone testifying, and that's not acceptable.

Speaker, if government is going to be trusted, they have to do the right thing. Without that, a government has nothing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I want to congratulate the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton on his thoughts on the Ornge bill that we're talking about, Bill 50, the air ambulance act.

Previously, I wanted to look at the auditor's report that was happening when the Minister of Health ordered the investigation of Ornge. To quote here on page 9, it says, "Previously, Ontario's air ambulance operations contracted with various private sector aircraft providers to transport patients." Originally, Ornge was contracting out to the private sector to transport its patients. "Ornge decided that, rather than relying on private sector operators, it would purchase new helicopters and airplanes to provide much of Ontario's air ambulance services." So they decided to take that upon themselves. "Because of certain features that Ornge wanted its aircraft to have, an open public competitive tender was not used."

There are just so many examples of what the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton talked about: transparency and accountability. Here this organization, Ornge, took it upon itself to decide to buy their own airplanes and not even open it up to tender the contracts.

The result was that these planes couldn't even service the patients that they were intended for. How could that have happened when we're trying to save people's lives? We don't have airplanes where you can stand up and allow some cardiac arrest, respiratory, saving measures; planes that didn't have two engines but only one. It's just appalling to know that this organization was able to do this without any accountability to this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**M. Shafiq Qadri:** Monsieur le Président, avec votre permission, je veux présenter quelques remarques en deux points de vue : premièrement, comme un médecin, et aussi comme un député à l'Assemblée législative.

Speaker, with your permission, I'd like to present a couple of thoughts in my dual capacities not only as a physician, but also as a parliamentarian.

I think ultimately, my aspiration—and I'm sure that's shared by my honourable colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton—is to offer the very best air ambulance service to Ontarians. As I understand it, the previous performance agreement would have actually called for the cancellation of the entire air ambulance service with three years' notice. That's why we're actually moving forward with Bill 50: to amend the various parameters, constraints and the agreement.

Specifically, for example, with this particular legislation, we'll appoint a supervisor, a special investigator, when the ambulance service is not being operated in the public interest, which is something that we've done similarly with hospitals. It will allow the Minister of Health to give directives to an air ambulance service provider—once again, that kind of internal oversight like we have at hospitals, as I can attest to on a first-hand basis. There's going to be added prescription and performance measures, as well as standards. It will allow the ministry to establish terms that are to be deemed included in the performance agreement between the ministry and the air ambulance service provider. Of course, there's probably about 15 other points that are being brought to bear with regard to Bill 50, the Ambulance Amendment Act.

I know that my honourable opponent, as was cited, with his legal mind, is going through each and every one of these particular initiatives and clauses, and I hope that we'll be able to move forward once again to restore confidence in the air ambulance system in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That's it for questions and comments, and we return to the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton for his reply.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you to all the members who responded, who joined in the debate. I want to make a couple of points very clear.

One is that while the committee itself does not have time limits, those time limits are imposed by the committee members. It's simply a factor of the allotted time for that committee. Having one committee dealing with the matter and having another committee would just give you more time—would give you more time, period—to address this matter which is taking a great deal of careful attention and scrutiny to get to the bottom of. Having another committee would assist in providing more time.

When it comes to my honourable colleague's comments with regards to the purpose of this bill providing greater ability to regulate, including being able to appoint a supervisor or special advisor, the issue is this: It wasn't the case that Ornge was stonewalling the ministry's attempts to have something done. It wasn't the case that the Minister of Health had tried to get to the bottom of

something and was blocked. In fact, there was no request made. There were no issues raised. There was no oversight done. It wasn't a factor that the ministry wanted to come in and say, "Listen, let me change something here." The fact is that the ministry was not overseeing, period.

These extra powers are great. Why not? But it doesn't address the true issue here, which was that the ministry was completely blind to what was going on. It didn't ask what was going on. It didn't take the steps to find out what was going on at Ornge. That's the problem. It's not a factor of having the appropriate powers or the appropriate tools; it's the fact that the ministry didn't use those tools. It didn't take the steps required. It didn't do the oversight. That's the problem here. So while this bill will give more power, it doesn't get to the bottom of why it occurred in the first place.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in this House and to speak on Bill 50, the Ambulance Amendment Act (Air Ambulances). Mr. Speaker, these proposed legislative amendments were precipitated by the problems identified by the Auditor General during his recent audit of Ornge, Ontario's air and critical-care land ambulance service.

Our government took decisive action to address the Auditor General's recommendations to establish a new standard of accountability at Ornge and to restore Ontarians' faith in the important services it provides. We committed to implement each and every one of the recommendations made by the Auditor General.

We went even further. First, we negotiated and ratified an amended performance agreement with the new Ornge board. Next, we introduced legislation to amend the Ambulance Act to enhance the government's ability to provide the necessary oversight into Ornge's activities.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's air ambulance program was established in 1977 by the then Ministry of Health with a single aircraft based in Toronto. In June 2005, the government transferred and consolidated the air ambulance program to the Ontario Air Ambulance Services Co., known as OAA, a federally incorporated not-for-profit corporation. In November 2005, our government finalized a long-term performance agreement with the OAA. The performance agreement had an indefinite term and governed all aspects of air ambulance services in the province. The performance agreement with Ornge established Ornge's and the ministry's responsibilities and expectations in the services to be delivered by Ornge; for example, base hospital, air contracting, organ recovery services and other aeromedical services and so on.

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It also covered compliance with grant funding and government accounting requirements; data tracking, retention and reporting; quality assurance in the education and training of flight paramedics and flight dispatch staff; a complaints and incident reporting process; documentation standards; and ministry evaluation and monitoring.



By January 2006, the OAA became responsible for all operational functions of the province's air ambulance program.

In September 2006, as the newly renamed Ornge, the corporation took over the management of the air ambulance dispatch.

In 2007, Ornge signed an agreement for expanded critical-care fixed-wing air ambulance services.

And in 2008, Ornge took over responsibility to provide critical-care land ambulance services. That same year, Ornge purchased new high-performance medically equipped helicopters and added new high-performance medically equipped aircraft to its fleet.

In 2009, Ornge air purchased four hangars, located in Ottawa, Moosonee, Kenora and London.

In 2010, Ornge opened Canada's first transport medicine centre of excellence and, by the end of that year, reached a significant milestone, transporting its 100,000th patient.

Since their creation, air ambulance services in Ontario have undergone a number of enhancements that extended services across the entire province.

In essence, the service had three main elements: funding, dispatch and oversight provided by the ministry-based hospital system at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, which oversaw the practice of paramedicine and air ambulance services, both helicopter and fixed-wing, that were contracted out.

For additional background, I want to turn briefly to the legislation and accountability mechanisms that govern ambulance services in Ontario. Both land and air ambulance services are governed by the Ambulance Act and regulations and standards made under that act.

The act sets out the responsibilities and expectations of the minister and other parties related to the delivery of land and air ambulance and related services.

The government provides Ornge with funding, through a contractual agreement, to deliver air ambulance services as part of the minister's obligation under the Ambulance Act to fund and ensure the provision of air ambulance service. The province also provides Ornge with funding to operate the critical-care land ambulance service.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Auditor General for his thorough and insightful review of Ornge. His advice has guided many of the actions our government is taking to fix the problems at Ornge, and we are confident that the concerns raised by the Auditor General will be addressed through the swift actions we have already taken, and through these proposed legislative amendments.

The Auditor General recommended that the ministry renegotiate the performance agreement with Ornge and establish measurable performance indicators. With the benefit of hindsight, it's clear that with the previous performance agreement, we simply did not have the oversight we needed or the power to step in sooner when it became evident that there were things going seriously wrong at Ornge.

Under the former agreement, the past leadership was able to avoid accountability and withhold information from the government concerning its for-profit companies. We simply did not have the power to regularly access financial information and monitor operations at Ornge.

It also became apparent that the limited operational and financial information that was provided to the ministry was insufficient and often inaccurate.

The old performance agreement did not require ministry approval to create for-profit entities like Ornge Global, which is where many of the problems began. The government had no control over these for-profit entities, and we were falsely assured that public dollars would not be used to fund their operations. Most of these Ornge for-profit entities are now gone, and the rest are in the process of being wound down.

In the past, Ornge also had no restrictions on assuming debt. The old performance agreement gave us no say in major acquisitions. We know that the former leadership made a significant helicopter purchase, and that they purchased and leased back their corporate headquarters.

Under the amended performance agreement, ratified by our government and the Ornge board on March 19, 2012 and now in effect, all these things have been fixed. The amended performance agreement raises the level of oversight far above that normally required of organizations receiving public funds.

Most importantly, we want to focus on safeguarding patient care at Ornge. The enhanced provisions of the amended performance agreement can be grouped under two general headings: greater accountability and transparency, and safeguarding patient safety and care.

As the Auditor General's report shows, Ornge was not providing the ministry with the appropriate operational and financial information we needed to assess the quality and value of its service, and it now appears that the information that was provided was often insufficient and/or inaccurate.

The amended performance agreement raises the level of oversight with the following measures and obligations:

- tougher funding conditions based on key performance indicators;
- increased audit and inspection powers by the ministry;
- more detailed financial planning, monitoring, control and reporting obligations;
- a committee to advise the board on quality improvement initiatives;
- a new patient advocate and complaints process to ensure patient safety, like the one used in Ontario hospitals;
- mandatory public reporting of expenses and restrictions on meals, travel and hospitality;
- quality improvement provisions that link executive compensation to performance improvement targets in an annual quality plan; and
- the mandatory approval by the minister for any changes to Ornge's corporate structure on the sale of assets by Ornge.

The Auditor General highlighted some concerns around dispatch and response times for air and critical-care land ambulance. Our government takes these concerns extremely seriously.

In the past, Ornge was not obligated to report emergency dispatch information. Going forward, the amended performance agreement will place a greater emphasis on performance standards and require increased reporting of dispatch information, including cancelled and declined air and land ambulance calls.

The performance agreement is closely aligned with the Excellent Care for All Act, which guides the province's hospitals. Quality improvements and key performance indicators will now be linked to both Ornge's funding and executive compensation. To ensure patients' safety remains paramount, a new patient advocate will be appointed, a complaints process will be developed, and it will be posted publicly.

The amended performance agreement also deals with enhancing the quality of Ornge's services based on objective, evidence-based performance indicators.

In addition, the performance agreement also provides for tougher funding conditions based on key performance indicators and a committee to advise the board on quality improvement initiatives.

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The second audit recommendation is for the ministry to conduct a formal program evaluation of critical care land ambulance transport in the province. In response, let me say that our government shares the auditor's concern that the government's expenditures should meet with value for that money. To address this concern and act upon it, the minister committed to a comprehensive program review that will evaluate the operational demand and Ornge's delivery model for both air and land ambulance.

This legislation is incredibly important. It gives government the powers it truly needs to provide oversight to any air ambulance provider. This legislation does the following:

- gives cabinet the power, upon the recommendation of the minister, to appoint one or more provincial representatives to the board of an air ambulance service provider;

- gives the minister the power to issue directives to an air ambulance service provider;

- gives the government the ability to include provisions in an agreement between Ontario and an air ambulance service provider; and

- provides cabinet with the power to appoint a special investigator to investigate and report on certain activities of an air ambulance service provider.

This legislation prohibits individuals from obstructing special investigators or from withholding any information required by the special investigator. This legislation requires a special investigator to provide a report to the minister upon completion of the investigation.

The legislation also provides cabinet with the power, upon the recommendation of the minister, to appoint a

supervisor to exercise the powers of the board, officers and members, and other corporate powers of an air ambulance service provider. The supervisor would have the same rights as the board of an air ambulance service provider. The supervisor would report to the minister.

This legislation also prohibits retaliation against a person who has disclosed information that relates to an air ambulance service provider to an inspector, investigator or a special investigator. Air ambulance service providers and other persons would also be prohibited from doing anything to discourage the making of such disclosures.

This legislation also allows the continuance of a provider of air ambulance service that is incorporated under the laws of any jurisdiction other than Ontario as a corporation under the Corporations Act.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation, along with the amended performance agreement, builds on the steps already taken to improve oversight at Ornge, including the launching of a forensic audit, the appointment of an interim president and CEO as well as a new board of directors, and the winding down of for-profit entities at Ornge. We have taken these measures in response to the Auditor General's recommendations, and we have taken actions to restore confidence in Ontario's air and critical care land ambulance services.

The new leadership at Ornge has established a new era of transparency and accountability at this organization. Thanks to their recommendations, commitment and dedication, there has already been terrific progress on improvements at Ornge. The leadership team at Ornge has been working to address concerns regarding the medical interiors of the helicopters, and they're now working to strengthen the online response process to:

- improve launch times;

- ensure appropriate staff coverage and coordination of resources across the province;

- evaluate the dispatch process;

- review patient safety initiatives under the supervision of Sunnybrook CEO and Ornge board member Dr. Barry McLellan; and

- review governance, oversight and procurement practices at Ornge.

There is no question that the new leadership at Ornge and the front-line staff are doing their utmost to deliver safe, reliable air ambulance services for Ontarians. They are putting their full efforts towards their core mission of providing life-saving care to Ontario patients.

I want to thank the dedicated paramedics, pilots and front-line staff at Ornge who work so hard every day to save lives. I am confident that the Auditor General's advice, combined with the actions that we are taking, will contribute to a better air ambulance service and the highest standard of care for all Ontarians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. It being very close to 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craiton, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

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Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative



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Milligan, Rob E. (PC) <b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Northumberland—Quinte West Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB) <b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	Richmond Hill York—Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham—Kent—Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches—East York	
Qadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea—Gore—Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward—Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
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Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB) <b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough—Agincourt Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett  
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh  
David Zimmer  
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Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
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Ms. Soo Wong.....	1939
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	1939

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Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	1940
Mr. John O'Toole.....	1940

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### Falun Dafa

Mr. Randy Hillier.....	1940
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### National Day of Mourning

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	1940
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### Pickering Soccer Club

Ms. Tracy MacCharles.....	1940
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### Ontario Provincial Police

Ms. Laurie Scott.....	1941
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### Ontario Northland Transportation Commission

Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	1941
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